

**A first record of the painted apple moth *Teia anartoides*
(Lepidoptera: Lymantriidae) intercepted in New Zealand**

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On 10 June 1983 Dr R. R. Forster was asked by a yardman to inspect 3 live redback spiders (*Latrodectus haselti* Thorell) which were found in Odlin's timber yard, Dunedin, near a container supported by a steel frame and which had held glass. The container had come from Melbourne, Australia, where it had apparently been stored outside

* Crib = Small holiday home.

for some time. On the frame were red back webs and the remains of melolonthid beetles upon which the red backs had been feeding. Also present on the frame were 5 cocoons and many eggs of the painted apple moth *Teia anartoides* (Walker) (Lepidoptera:

Lymantriidae). The Australian red back spider is already established in New Zealand (Forster 1982). The painted apple moth is a pest species that similarly could become established here. Three cocoons were taken to the Otago Museum and kept in a dry petri dish. From these a male and 2 females emerged, 1 of which mated. The mated female laid several hundred eggs, some of which hatched.

DESCRIPTION

Adult male (Fig. 1): wingspan \pm 25 mm; forewings dark brown marked with black; hind wings orange with a broad black outer band; superficially resembling New Zealand *Metacrias* (tiger moth) males.

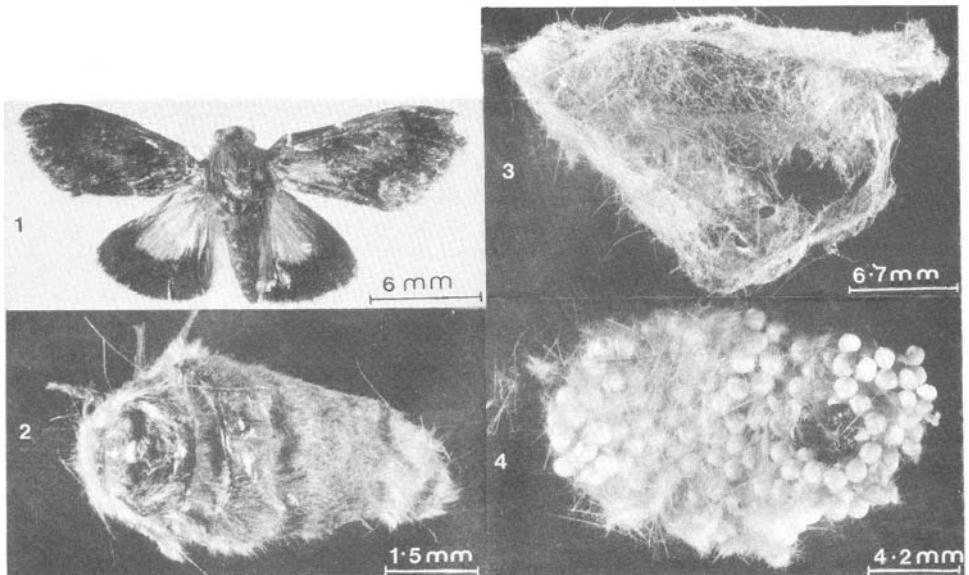
Adult female (Fig. 2): wingless; body \pm 6 mm long; densely covered with short buff hair.

Pupa: black with orange markings, within a loosely-spun silken cocoon. (Fig. 3) Eggs (Fig. 4): glossy white, spherical, laid in irregular masses, often on the female cocoon; eclosion in 7-10 days.

Larva: densely clothed with brown hairs, with 4 tufts of white hairs on the back and 2 black, horn-like tufts projecting forwards. The specimens are deposited in the National Arthropod Collection.

DISTRIBUTION

New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania.



Figs 1-4: *Teia anartoides* (Walker).

Fig. 1: Adult male.

Fig. 2: Adult female.

Fig. 3: Pupa in silken cocoon.

Fig. 4: Egg mass on cocoon.

(All photos by D. Sanderson.)

COMMENTS

Although its native food plants were probably *Acacia* species, recorded host plants of the painted apple moth include *Geranium*, *Pelargonium*, *Rosa*, broad beans, "lawns", *Cotoneaster*, passion fruit, *Pinus radiata*, apple, apricot, willows, banana, *Dahlia*, cape weed (*Arctotheca*) and numerous others (E. D. Edwards pers. comm.). The female is flightless and larvae do not disperse from a silken thread in the wind. Dispersal occurs by means of a wandering 1st instar larva which probably accounts for the wide host tolerance. These 2 characteristics might enable this species to become temporarily established in New Zealand, but the means of dispersal would render an infestation easily isolated and controlled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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REFERENCE

Forster, L. M., 1982: The Australian redback spider—an unwelcome immigrant to New Zealand. *The Weta* 5: 35.