

Check these pests of CACAO

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A number of pests and diseases attack the cacao crop during its various stages of growth and timely and adequate plant protection measures are a must to control them. Here is how you can control some of the more important pests of cacao that affect the crop in its early stages.

Mealy bugs

They are pale light red in colour covered by white fluffy pubescence and invade the stem and young growing buds. Since they feed on the sap, the affected plants appear sick and gradually die. In badly infested seedlings, withering occurs and the plant dies within 4 or 5 days. Mealy bugs are potential vectors of some plant pathogens.

Control : Spray 0.02 per cent Phosphomedon or 0.05 per cent Dimethoate at fortnightly intervals. Spraying should be done thoroughly on the infested shoots. If necessary drench the shoot and the soil around the collar region with the insecticide to check root infestation also.

Aphids

Aphids affecting cacao plants are light green in colour and

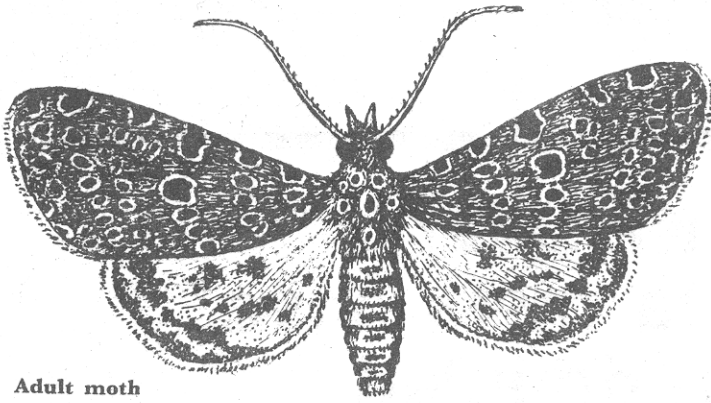


Grey weevil can cause a lot of damage to cacao leaves

A close view of the damaged leaf

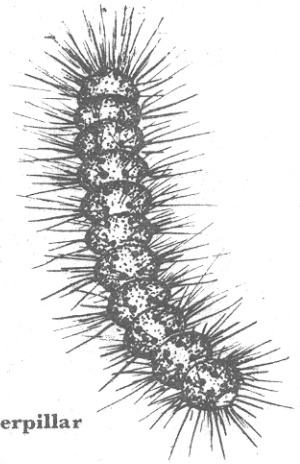


Hairy Caterpillar



Adult moth

Caterpillar



colonise the terminal growing leaf and two or three young green leaves of the seedlings. Since they are also sap feeders they suck the nutrients from the plant and the plant loses vigour resulting in stunted growth.

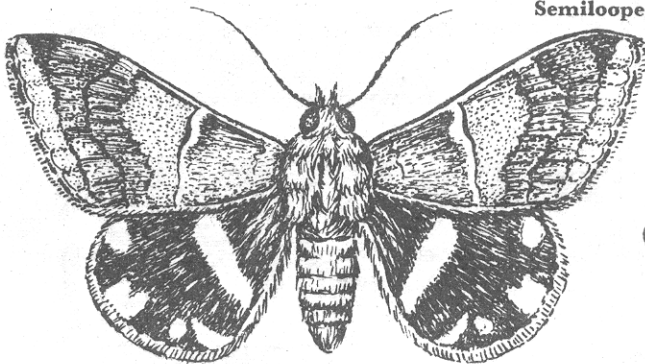
Control : Spray 0.02 per cent

surface of leaves or in the soil in a scattered way. The emerging grubs feed on the roots and other decaying vegetable matter. The grubs pupate on the soil. The adult is polyphagous and feeds even on cotton, drumstick, lady's finger, fodder and grasses.

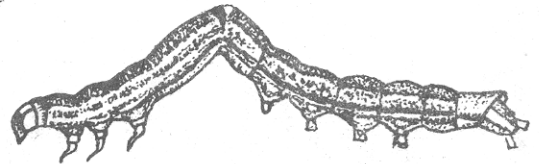
on the undersurface of the leaf. Sometimes the larvae are gregarious in habit and cause heavy damage. The larvae feed on castor, sorghum, etc.

Control : Dust 5 per cent BHC or DDT or spray 0.2 per cent BHC.

Semilooper



Adult moth



Caterpillar

Dimethoate solution at the rate of 250 litres per hectare. Spray as soon as the pest appears. If needed, spray again at fortnightly intervals or spray Dimecron 200 gm/ha at monthly intervals.

Grey weevil

This is a voracious feeder feeding on the leaves of the plants. In severely affected cases, the entire leaf is eaten leaving the midrib alone. It rests on the lower side of the leaves and makes irregular holes on the leaf. The adult has a pointed snout. Females lay eggs either on the under-

Control : Spray 300-600 gm Dimecron per hectare when the pest is noticed. Lindane is also found useful in controlling the pest.

Hairy caterpillar

The black hairy caterpillar feeds on the leaves and causes considerable damage. They feed on leaves leaving the midrib alone. The adult moth has a black forewing with irridiscent red spots and a pale hindwing with irregular brown patches. During daytime the larvae usually rest

Semilooper

The caterpillars of semiloopers feed on tender foliage. They are long and slender, greyish brown with a dorsal hump near the hind-end of the body.

They are also voracious feeders, eating the leaves and stalks leading to defoliation. The adult insect is stout greyish brown mole with black blotches on the hindwings. It also feeds in pomegranate, castor and a few weeds.

Control : Dust 5-10 per cent BHC or Chlorodane or spray 0.2 per cent BHC.