



## Pacific Pests and Pathogens - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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### Cucumber moth (033)



Photo 1. Caterpillar of *Diaphania indica* exposed on a watermelon leaf that it has rolled.



Photo 2. Severe damage on cucumber by *Diaphania indica*. The caterpillar has emerged from the rolled edges of the leaf and skeletonised the leaf by eating between the veins.



Photo 3. Caterpillar of *Diaphania indica* showing the characteristic double white lines along its back.



Photo 4. Pupa of *Diaphania indica*. (This pupa has been parasitised.)



Photo 5. Unknown parasitoid wasp emerged from pupa shown in Photo 4.



Photo 6. Adult *Diaphania indica*. Note the black border to the wings.



Photo 7. A lacewing. The larvae of this insect attack the young caterpillars of *Diaphania*.

## Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In tropics and sub-tropics. On cucurbits; common cucurbits are watermelon, cucumber, melon, pumpkin and snake gourd. An important pest.
- Eggs are laid in small groups on the buds or flowers. The larvae hatch, roll the leaves, fasten them with silk, and eat them between the veins. Young fruits are attacked.
- Natural enemies: parasitoid wasps; lacewing larvae.
- Cultural control: check regularly for infestations (rolled leaves, faeces), and squeeze rolled leaves between finger and thumb.
- Chemical control: PDPs: chilli, derris, pyrethrum, or neem; use Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), or spinosad, but best on young larvae; or synthetic pyrethroids, but more likely to kill natural enemies.

## Common Name

Cucumber moth. Other common names are, melon moth, pumpkin caterpillar, cucurbit caterpillar and watermelon worm.

## Scientific Name

*Diaphania indica*. A moth of the Crambidae.

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Photo 3 Wilco Liebrechts, Ecoconsult, Fiji. Photos 4&5 Gerald McCormack, Cook Islands Biodiversity & Natural Heritage: (<http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org/>).

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