



## Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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### Bean pod borer (037)



Photo 1. Caterpillar of bean pod borer, *Maruca vitrata*.  
Note, the two rows of dark dots on its back.



Photo 2. Caterpillar of bean pod borer, *Maruca vitrata*,  
feeding on a cowpea bean.



Photo 3. Adult bean pod borer, *Maruca vitrata*.



Photo 4. Adult bean pod borer, *Maruca vitrata*.

### Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In tropics. On bean, including French bean, cowpeas, pigeon peas and yard long beans. An important pest.
- Caterpillars have two rows of black dots on the back.
- At first, caterpillars feed in the flowers making webs, then bore into the pods to eat the seeds. Look for frass – waste matter – at entry holes.
- Cultural control: avoid planting near old crops; handpick flowers with webbing; grow maize/sorghum between bean rows; collect debris and destroy; check AVRDC for tolerant varieties.
- Chemical control: aim to kill caterpillars in flowers as difficult for chemicals to enter pods. PDPs: neem, derris, pyrethrum, or chilli; use spinosad or Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Alternatively, synthetic pyrethroids, but may kill natural enemies.

### Common Name

Bean pod borer

### Scientific Name

*Maruca vitrata*; it used to be known as *Maruca testulalis*.

Photo 1 Shepard M, Carner GR, Ooi PAC Insects and their Natural Enemies Associated with Vegetables and Soybean in Southeast Asia, Bugwood.org. Photo 3 Gerald McCormack, Cook Islands Biodiversity Website: (<http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org/>).

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