



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

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## Coconut spike moth (111)



Photo 1. Adult coconut spike moth, *Tirathaba rufivena*.  
Note the narrow, brown forewings.

### Summary

- Narrow distribution. Southeast Asia. On coconut and oil palm, mostly. There are conflicting views on whether this moth is a pest. Nut fall occurs naturally, with the number adjusted to reserves of the palm; if the moth accounts for 10% then natural nutfall will be less, so that the overall effect on yield is negligible.
- Eggs are laid at the base of flowers and leaves; the larvae bore into female flowers causing them to fall.
- Natural enemies: wasp parasitoids are known.
- Cultural control: in the Philippines MAWA hybrids are thought to be more susceptible.
- Chemical control: none recommended: unlikely to be economic, and insecticides will kill the parasitoids. Additionally, the pest status of this insect is uncertain

### Common Name

Coconut spike moth, oil palm bunch moth

### Scientific Name

*Tirathaba rufivena*, but probably at least three species exist.

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<sup>1</sup>Information from Waterhouse DF, Norris KR (1987) *Biological Control Pacific Prospects*. Inkata Press; and from <sup>2</sup>Swaine G (1971) *Agricultural Zoology in Fiji*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London. Photo 1 Gerald McCormack, Cook Islands Biodiversity & Natural Heritage. (<http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org>).

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