Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Poinciana looper moth (251)

Photo 1. Mature caterpillar of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri*, showing the green head, the lines along the side.

Photo 2. Mature caterpillar of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri*, and a cocoon at the end of the leaf made from drawing leaflets together with silken threads.

Photo 3. The same leaf as in Photo 2, showing the mature caterpillar of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri*, and the leaves drawn together to form a cocoon.

Photo 4. Mature caterpillar of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri*, showing green head, the white back and the silken threads of the cocoon.

Photo 5. Defoliation of *Delonix regia* caused by caterpillars of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri.*

Photo 6. Closer view of defoliation of *Delonix regia* caused by caterpillars of the poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri.* Many of the leaves have been completely stripped by the caterpillars.

Photo 7. Pupa, poinciana looper, *Perimcyma cruegeri.*

Photo 8. Adult, poinciana looper moth, *Pericyma cruegeri.*

Photo 9. Adult, poinciana looper moths, *Pericyma cruegeri*, side and top views.

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Southeast Asia, North America (Hawaii), Oceania. On poinciana, *Acacia*, *Cassia* and *Leucaena*. An important pest.
- Egg on leaflets; at first, caterpillars feed together, later solitary, up to 7 cm, with “neck” region behind a large head, and white band along the back. Adults are brown, with wavy lines on wings.
- Damaging: frequent stripping of leaflets causes dieback, and loss of vigour and encourages borers.
- Cultural control: it is possibly that weather is more important than natural enemies.
- Chemical control: Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is effective but likely to be uneconomic in most situations.

Common Name

Poinciana looper moth

Scientific Name

Pericyma cruegeri

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Information (and Photos 1,4&9) from Thaman R, Dutt R (2019) The 2019 Fiji poinciana looper moth invasion: A call for action. PaCE-SD Technical Report 1. Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development. University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. Photos 2,3,5&6 Sione Foliaki, Deputy Director and Head of Agricultural Research and Information Division, MAF, Tonga. Photo 7 Simione Tukidia, SPC, Fiji. Photo 8 BIO/CSIRO Photography Unit.

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