

Taro hornworm (032)

Summary

- Widespread distribution. In tropical and temperate Asia, Oceania. An important pest.
- Eggs are laid on the leaves and petioles. Mature caterpillars eat between veins, sometimes all the leaf.
- Look for the horn and the large eye spots.
- Outbreaks uncommon because of natural enemies, and other control measure not needed.
- Natural enemies: parasitoid wasps.
- Cultural control: visit garden regularly; handpick caterpillars; allow chickens into the taro fields.
- Chemical control: not usually required. If needed, use PDPs: neem, pyrethrum, or chilli; use products from bacteria, e.g., spinosad or Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) on young caterpillars. Alternatively, use synthetic pyrethroids, but likely to kill natural enemies.

Common Name

Taro hornworm

Scientific Name

Hippotion celerio. It is a member of the Sphingidae.



Photo 1. A caterpillar of taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*, eating a leaf and leaving only the veins.



Photo 2. Severe damage to taro caused by the taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*; the leaves have been eaten leaving only the leaf stalks or petioles.

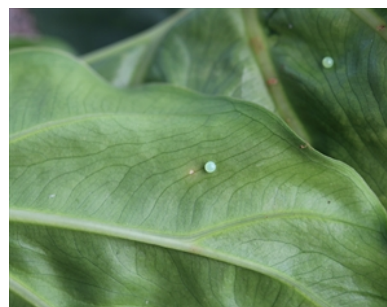


Photo 3. Solitary egg of taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*.



Photo 4. When mature the caterpillars of taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*, are dark brown.



Photo 5. Pupa taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*.



Photo 6. Adult taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio*.

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Information from Diongzon, Jr, Gapasin DP (1981) Biology of taro hornworm, *Hippotion celerio* L. Annals of Tropical Research. (<https://annalsoftropicalresearch.com/biology-of-taro-hornworm-hippotion-celerio-l/>); and from Carmichael A, et al. (2008) TaroPest: an illustrated guide to pests and diseases of taro in the South Pacific. ACIAR Monograph No. 132, 76 pp. (<https://ird.spc.int/about-ird/ird-project-partners/taropest>). Photo 3 Mike Furlong, University of Queensland, Brisbane. Photo 5 Wikipedia. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippotion_celerio). Photo 5 Mani Mua, SPC, Sigatoka Research Station, Fiji.

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