

Pandanus leaf webworm (389)

Summary

- Unknown distribution. In Oceania, Fiji. A serious pest of *Pandanus*.
- Damage: larvae web tips of young leaves together and feed on the surface layers, which become silvery and withered as the leaves mature.
- Larva with flattened yellow body, red-brown head; pupa bordered by crescent-shaped mass of chewed leaf; adults light-brown, with hindwings fringed with thick hairs.
- Natural enemies: unknown.
- Cultural control: cut of tips of the leaves, and destroy the larvae.
- Chemical control: biorational pesticides: (i) botanicals (chillies, neem, derris, pyrethrum); (ii) microbials e.g., spinosad, Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *kurstaki*) against young caterpillars; (iii) synthetic pyrethroids - avoid, if possible, as they are likely to destroy natural enemies, if present. Spot-spray damaged shoots rather than 'blanket' spray.

Common Name

Pandanus leaf webworm

Scientific Name

Aeolarchis sphenotoma. It was known previously as *Erechthias fibrivora*, and before that *Decadarchis fibrivora*, the name under which it was described. It is a moth of the Tineidae, fungus moths.



Photo 4. Adult Pandanus leaf webworm, *Aeolarchis sphenotoma*.



Photo 1. Damage by the Pandanus leaf webworm, *Aeolarchis sphenotoma*.



Photo 2. Larva of the Pandanus leaf webworm, *Aeolarchis sphenotoma*.



Photo 3. Red-brown pupa, *Aeolarchis sphenotoma*, bordered by crescent-shaped mass of chewed leaf.

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¹Information from Swaine G (1971) *Agricultural Zoology in Fiji*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office. London.

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