

## Sweetpotato hornworm (027)

### Summary

- Widespread distribution. Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania. Sweetpotato main host, but it also occurs on eggplant, capsicum, tomato, and legumes. Occasionally, an important pest.
- Larvae eat young succulent leaves. Eggs are laid singly on the leaves and stems. Outbreaks are not common, although they are devastating when they occur.
- Natural enemies: parasitoid wasps and predators.
- Cultural control: avoid planting next to gardens where outbreaks have occurred; handpicking; use chickens; collect vines and other trash and burn after harvest.
- Chemical control: none recommended for routine treatments, as pesticides will disrupt natural control. For major outbreaks: PDPs: neem, derris, pyrethrum, or chilli; or biopesticides – Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), or spinosad. Synthetic pyrethroids are likely to kill natural enemies.

### Common Name

Sweet potato hornworm, Convolvulus hawk moth

### Scientific Name

*Agrius convolvuli*. It is a member of the Sphingidae.



Photo 4. Adult *Agrius convolvuli*. The wingspan of this moth can reach 12 cm.



Photo 1. Sweet potato hornworm larva, *Agrius convolvuli*. Note colours range from green, brown to black.



Photo 2. Sweet potato hornworm larva, *Agrius convolvuli*. Note colours range from green, brown to black.



Photo 2. Pupa of sweet potato hornworm larva, *Agrius convolvuli*.

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Information (and Photo 2) from O'Sullivan J *et al.*, Sweetpotato DiagNotes: A diagnostic key and information tool for sweetpotato problems.

(<http://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/sweetpotato/key/Sweetpotato%20DiagNotes/Media/Html/FrontPage/FrontPage.htm>). Photo 3 Wikipedia. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrius\\_convolvuli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrius_convolvuli)).

Produced with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research under project PC/2010/090: *Strengthening integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production*, implemented by the University of Queensland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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