

Cup moths

Scientific name: *Doratifera* spp. *Doratifera oxleyi*

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Incurvariidae

Cup moths are widely distributed across eastern and southern Australia, with most species being reported as occasional moderate pests of eucalypts. In the Green Triangle region, however, *Doratifera oxleyi* has been responsible for severe defoliation of *E. globulus*. The larvae are the damaging stage with early instars skeletonising the leaves while older caterpillars eat the entire leaf, leaving only the midrib.

Cup moth caterpillars are legless and “slug-like” in appearance, often brightly coloured and patterned with spines on their bodies. The spines can cause a sting if they come in contact with bare skin. The head is concealed under the body and a fully developed caterpillar may reach lengths between 25 and 40 mm. The eggs are flat and yellow-brown and are covered with hairs from the body of the female. They are laid in batches between 5 and 10 mm in diameter on the surface of a leaf. Cocoons are grey-brown, cup shaped with a circular lid (hence the name 'cup moth') and are usually attached to twigs or debris on the ground. Adult moths are stout and covered with fine hairs. The forewings are usually brown with a white fringe and the hindwings paler in colour. The female moth is larger than the male but similar in colour. The male has serrated antennae. There are two generations and caterpillars can be found in spring and autumn. Caterpillars pupate in summer and early winter.



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Typical damage



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Doratifera oxleyi: Adult and larva



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Doratifera quadriguttata: Adult and larva