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EXPERIMENT STATION

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STRAWBERRY CROWN BORER

Synanthedon rutilans

by

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The damage done by this insect during the last two seasons, 1924-25, has been unusually severe. Not only have old plantings been destroyed but in many cases one year old patches were attacked and seriously damaged. The records of the Entomology Department indicate that the crown borer tends to appear in serious numbers in cycles, there being two or three years of heavy infestations followed by several years of lighter infestation during which less damage is done. Taking the state as a whole and over a period of years this pest ranks second to the strawberry weevil. Plants injured by the crown borer sometimes survive in a wet season and produce a crop whereas in a dry season they often die thus giving the impression that dry seasons are more favorable for the development of the pest.

The strawberry crown borer is the larva of a small clear wing moth. This larva when full grown is $5/8$ to $3/4$ of an inch long, white, with a dark brown head and black feet. The larva tunnels within the crown, eventually eating out the entire center portion of the crown, so that a slight pull on the plant will often cause it to break off near the surface of the ground, exposing the larval tunnels and sometimes the larva itself. Upon reaching maturity the larva spins a cocoon within which it changes to a pupa, and in about three weeks the adult moth emerges.

The adult moth has a wing expanse of about $7/8$ of an inch. The ground color of the body is black with two yellow stripes on the thorax and yellow bands around the abdomen. The legs are yellow with black markings. The forewings are brownish black and the hindwings are almost transparent. The wings have a purple iridescence.

Soon after emergence the moths mate and eggs are deposited, which hatch in from 2 weeks to a month. There is but one generation a year. The brood, however, is very uneven for adults can be found from May until September.

Digging up and burning the infested plants is the only known control for this insect. This is best done soon after the crop is harvested. The injured plants usually have an unhealthy appearance with many of the leaves turning brown or dead. Old heavily infested patches are a source of infestation for younger patches in the vicinity, and should be dug up and burned.

Adults of this species frequent flowers, feeding on the honey. Because of this habit of the adults the Entomology Department of the Oregon Experiment Station is trying out a series of tests to see if it is possible to control this insect by a poison bait.