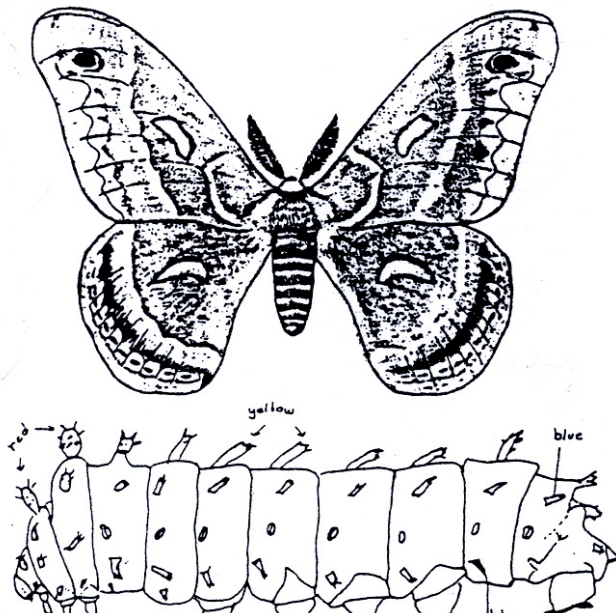


Cecropia Moth

Hyalophora cecropia



Description. The cecropia moth and its caterpillar often attract attention during the summer months because of their large size. The moth has a wingspread of 5 to 6 inches and is the largest of the silkworm moths in this country. The larva is a greenish caterpillar with bright colored tubercles or warts on its body. It attains a length of 4 inches when full grown.

Life History. In early summer adult moths mate and the females lay ovoid, cream-colored eggs on the upper sides of leaves in short rows. The small (1/4 inch) larvae hatch and are at first black. The larval stage lasts from 4 to 8 or 9 weeks. As the larvae mature, they turn a greenish color and develop two rows of blue tubercles along the sides of the body, two rows of yellow tubercles down the back, and two large pairs of red tubercles on the thorax. The larvae feed for about two weeks in the mature stage

before beginning to spin the large red-brown cocoons that turn gray with age. Cocoons are formed on twigs and usually both ends of the cocoon are attached to the twig. The adult moths emerge the following summer, usually in June, and the cycle begins again. The adult moth is a cinnamon-red color with each wing crossed by a white band near the outer edge. In the middle of each wing is a crescent shaped white spot bordered by red. The adult moths are usually quite during the day, and fly a little at night. They are attracted to electric lights and lighted windows. The moths do not feed.

Injury and Management. There is usually little damage from the larvae of the cecropia, because they do not occur in large numbers in any one locale. The larvae feed on a variety of deciduous trees and shrubs including plants in the Rosaceae family, willows, maples and lilacs. The larvae do not bite or sting despite their appearance. Generally control is not necessary. There are a number of natural predators and parasites that work together to keep populations of the cecropia down.

However, once in a while populations may be large enough to cause damage. If this should occur, either Bt or carbaryl (Sevin) may be used for control. Be sure to follow the manufacturers directions carefully when using any pesticides.

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