

Swarming Caterpillar: Sporadic Pest of Rice

E-BULLETIN-4

¹PURNIMA DAS & ²BINITA BORAH
¹Assistant Professor, ²Research Scholar
Department of Entomology
AAU, Jorhat-13

Swarming caterpillar, *Spodoptera mauritia*
Lepidoptera: Noctuidae

DAMAGE SYMPTOMS:

- Larvae cut the seedlings in large scale.
- Cattle grazed appearance is found in heavy infested field.
- Sporadic pest and occasionally causes heavy yield losses.
- Prolonged dry condition followed by heavy rainfall favours its outbreak.

IDENTIFICATION

Egg: Eggs are laid in a cluster covered with creamy greyish hairs.

Larva: Caterpillars are light green with blackish white lateral and dorsal stripes in the early stages

In the later stage it become dark brown or grayish green in colour with a semi-circular shaped black spot on the side of each segment.

Pupa: Pupa is dark brown colour. Before pupation the larvae become curls and move down ward for pupation and pupate in the soil and debris.

Adult: Moth is medium sized, stout built dark brown with a conspicuous triangular black spot on the forewings. Hind wings are brownish white with thin black margins.



Incubation Period
4-5 days

Adults
9-11 days



Life cycle of
S. mauritia
40-51 days



Pupal period
7-8 days



Larval period
17-29 days



INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Damage symptoms

- Deep ploughing of the field before planting.
- Erection of Bamboo "T" perches.
- Under natural conditions, the parasitization of *S. mauritia* egg masses ranged from 80-90 per cent by *Telenomus* spp, Ashmead (a scelionid egg parasite).
- Application of kerosene oil (approx.2 L kerosene per hectare) into the stagnant water in the banded fields followed by shaken plants rigorously then larvae fall into the kerosenized water and killed.
- Native entomopathogenic fungi namely *Beauveria* and *Isaria* are found to be effective against this pest.