

# Biological Control of Mimosa

## LEUCIRIS

### Leaf Feeding Moth

January 2018

*Leuciris fimbriaria* is the scientific name of the leaf feeding moth commonly called leuciris. It is a small white moth with gold edging around the wing. Leuciris caterpillars (larvae) can look quite similar to the caterpillars of macaria, which is another moth that is a biological control agent for mimosa.

Leuciris is native to Mexico and was introduced into the Northern Territory in 2004 after three years of quarantine testing. It is now established and widespread.

The caterpillars of the leuciris moths feed on the leaves of mimosa, reducing its ability to grow and produce seed. They also increase mimosa's susceptibility to disease, and generally decrease the cost and increase the effectiveness of other control measures.



Leuciris Adult

The feeding damage caused by caterpillars can be significant and leaves are often completely eaten.

Adult female moths lay batches of green-blue eggs on mimosa. After five days the eggs hatch into small, delicate green caterpillars. The developing caterpillars feed on the leaves and increase in size over 13-16 days, and may reach a full size of 2.5cm in length. They pupate in the soil or leaf litter for about eight days then emerge as adults. The whole cycle takes about 30 days.



Leuciris caterpillar



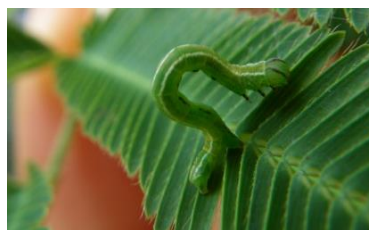
Macaria caterpillar



Leuciris breeding colony



Eggs



Caterpillar



Pupae

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