

Farmer Fact Sheet 17: Banana scab moth



What is it?

It is an insect that damages fruits of banana when they are very young and still wrapped in leaves. The scientific name is *Nacoleia*.

What damage does it do?

The moth (photo, top right) lays its eggs near the flower. The caterpillars (photo, left arrowed) hatch and then enter the flower.

The caterpillars feed on the skin of the young fruit. A crust or scab forms on the damaged parts (photo, lower right). If the damage is severe, the fingers are misshapen. Sometimes, the caterpillars eat through the skin and feed on the flesh of the fruit.

How do I identify it?

Look at the young developing fruit. Look for feeding damage, black scabs on the skin, or caterpillar droppings. The moth is light brown with small black spots on the wings.

How do I control scab moth?

Inspect the banana plants daily for new flowers. Before the flowers bend horizontally; partly or completely remove the leaves around the flower; then spray the fruit with water, dust them with ashes or spray with insecticides. In Australia, farmers inject the flowers with insecticides, when it is still upright. Dilute insecticide (20 to 40 ml) is injected a third the way down the fruit. See your MAL extension officer for details.