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## ***Melanchra picta* (Harris) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae), a cutworm new to British Columbia**

**SHEILA M. FITZPATRICK and JAMES T. TROUBRIDGE<sup>1</sup>**

AGRICULTURE CANADA RESEARCH STATION,  
6660 N.W. MARINE DRIVE, VANCOUVER, B. C., CANADA V6T 1X2

1. ORDER OF AUTHORS DECIDED BY TOSS OF A COIN.

Here we report the occurrence of the zebra caterpillar, *Melanchra picta* (Harris) as a minor pest of commercial cranberries, *Vaccinium macrocarpon* Ait., in Langley and Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, during the summer of 1991. In the field, zebra caterpillars ate the growing tips of cranberry runners and uprights. In the laboratory, larvae preferred succulent cranberry tissue, consuming mature leaves only if no new growth remained. In the field and laboratory, larvae also consumed the foliage of dicotyledonous weeds such as cutleaf blackberry, *Rubus laciniatus* Willd., western St. John's wort, *Hypericum formosum* Humboldt, marsh St. John's wort, *Triadenum virginicum* L., and Watson's willow herb, *Epilobium watsonii* Barbey. In eastern Canada, zebra caterpillars have been reported to feed on a wide variety of fruit, vegetable, and leguminous forage crops (Beirne, 1971).

Early records of zebra caterpillar infestations in British Columbia (Cockle, 1911; Middleton, 1913) actually referred to *Mamestra canadensis* Smith, now considered a synonym of *Lacanobia nevadae* (Grote). In Canada, the zebra caterpillar, *M. picta*, occurs from the Atlantic coast, west to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, whereas in the U.S.A. its range extends further west into California, Oregon, and Washington. There are no specimens of *M. picta* from B.C. in the Canadian National Collection, the Royal British Columbia Museum, or the Spencer Collection, University of British Columbia, nor does *M. picta* appear on lists of B. C. fauna (e.g. Llewellyn Jones, 1951). Recent reports of *M. picta* on strawberries, *Fragaria x ananassa* Duch., in 1981, highbush blueberries, *Vaccinium corymbosum* L., in 1983 (Belton, 1988), and corn, *Zea mays* L., in 1990 (Philip, 1991) in B. C. probably refer to this species. Since the zebra caterpillar has previously been found very close to the B.C. border in Washington State, (Tonasket, 40 km south of Osoyoos, B.C.; Puyallup, 55 km south of Seattle), we believe that its presence in B. C. represents a recent range extension rather than an introduction.

The zebra caterpillar is not usually a significant pest, but local outbreaks have been recorded from eastern Canada (Beirne, 1971). The larva has a red head capsule and a black stripe running down its back. On each side of its body, a black longitudinal stripe, broken with narrow, white, vertical lines, runs between two bright yellow stripes. *M. picta* is bivoltine, with larvae present during late June and July and again in September in the Fraser Valley. Its presence on cranberries, an economically important crop in B. C., bears watching.

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## Distribution of European winter moth, *Operophtera brumata* (L.)<sup>1</sup>, and Bruce spanworm, *O. bruceata* (Hulst), in the lower Fraser Valley, British Columbia

SHEILA M. FITZPATRICK<sup>2, 3</sup>, JAMES T. TROUBRIDGE<sup>3</sup>,  
and BARBARA PETERSON<sup>4</sup>

1. LEPIDOPTERA: GEOMETRIDAE

2. AUTHOR TO WHOM CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.

3. AGRICULTURE CANADA RESEARCH STATION,  
6660 N.W. MARINE DRIVE, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6T 1X2

4. PRO-TECH CROP PROTECTION, COAST AGRI CROP PRODUCTS,  
464 RIVERSIDE ROAD S., R.R. 2, ABBOTSFORD, B.C. V2S 4N2

### ABSTRACT

Sixteen pheromone traps, baited with (Z,Z,Z)-1,3,6,9-nonadecatetraene, were placed in commercial blueberry and raspberry fields, and at one woodland site in the lower Fraser Valley. Traps were monitored weekly from early November, 1990 until late January, 1991. Winter moth males were recovered from all but the eastern-most trap in Mission. Four traps in blueberry fields in Richmond caught a total of 2,928 winter moths, and 198 were caught in two traps in Delta and Surrey, whereas only 74 came to the ten traps north and east of Surrey. A total of 1,306 Bruce spanworm males were trapped. Although spanworm moths were recovered from traps in all areas, there was no correlation between trap location and number of spanworms caught. Thirteen males with characters intermediate between the two species were trapped in Richmond and Surrey. Males of both species were more numerous in raspberries than in nearby blueberry fields. Spanworm males came to the traps later in the fall than winter moths. East of Richmond, most spanworm males were trapped during November whereas, in Richmond, very few were attracted until the first week of December.