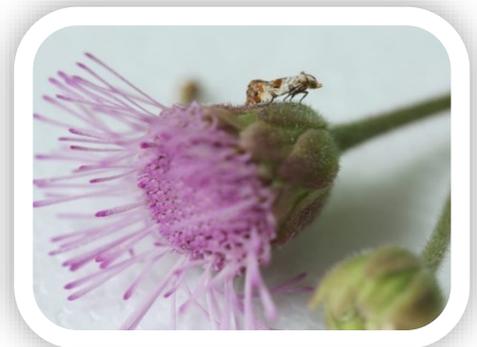




First release of the pompom flower-feeding moth, *Cochylis campuloclinium*, in South Africa

The flower-feeding moth, *Cochylis campuloclinium*, was first recorded by the late Dr Stefan Nesor (ARC-PHP) and Fernando Mc Kay (FUEDEI) in Argentina in 2003 when surveying for natural enemies of pompom weed, *Campuloclinium macrocephalum*. The moth was later described as a new species in 2006. Following the importation of the moth into quarantine at PHP Roodeplaat, its host range and impact were assessed. Results from these trials found the moth to be suitably host specific to pompom weed, whilst laboratory impact studies demonstrated that *C. campuloclinium* larvae destroyed a significant number of florets in pompom flower buds (76%) and seeds in mature flowers (54%). Based on the laboratory data, permission for the release of the moth was applied for and granted in October 2015 by the South African regulatory authorities. However, re-importation and release of the flower-feeding moth was delayed for almost seven years due to permitting and importation issues until a new culture landed from Argentina in February 2021. After successfully overwintering in quarantine and screening for parasitoids, the moth culture was reared and the first field release made in January 2022 in the Magaliesberg Biosphere. This is a fitting tribute to the late, Dr Stefan Nesor, long-time member of the Mountaineering Club of South Africa (Magaliesberg) and protector of biodiversity. Planned releases will now follow throughout GP, LP, MP and NW Provinces. Once basic release methods and monitoring studies have been established, the moth will be made available to the public for wider distribution throughout the invasive range of pompom weed.



Adult pompom flower-feeding moth

The first release of the flower-feeding moth, *Cochylis campuloclinium* by ARC-PHP together with members of the SA Mountaineering Club in the Magalies Biosphere. A tribute to the late Dr Stefan Nesor (right).

Photos supplied by Mountain Club members and A. McConnachie



For any further enquiries

Please contact our researcher, Ms Liamé van der Westhuizen (VDWesthuizenL@arc.agric.za), or our Research Team Manager, Dr. Roger Price (PriceR@arc.agric.za)