

# THE HAKEA SEED-MOTH

(*Carposina autologa*)

A natural enemy of

**SILKY HAKEA** (*Hakea sericea*)

in South Africa

12

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## DESCRIPTION

The adult moths are about 10 mm long and grey-brown. The adults are present on the plants between February and June and live for several weeks. Because of their colouring they are often inconspicuous.

## LIFE CYCLE

There is one generation a year. The adults lay their eggs singly or in groups in crevices on the surface of mature hakea fruits or between touching fruit. The eggs hatch a few weeks later and the larva excavates a tiny hole into the fruit where its two halves meet. The larva feeds on both seeds in the fruit. Only one larva can develop per fruit. The larval stage lasts about 135 days after which the mature larva tunnels out through a 2mm hole to pupate in the soil.

## FEEDING DAMAGE

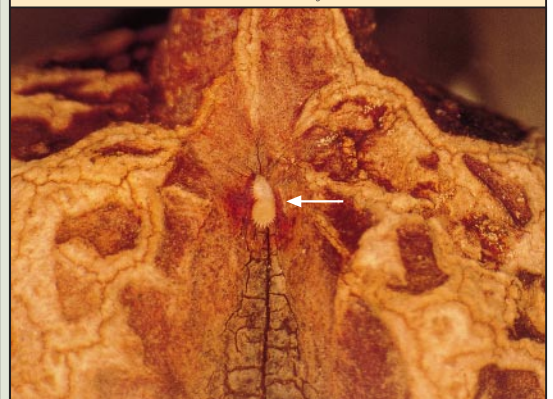
An attacked fruit is indistinguishable from a healthy fruit except for the small exit hole on the surface of the fruit. This hole can be very difficult to find. However, by cutting fruit open the damaged seeds are easily recognised

## IMPACT ON HAKEA

Because the larvae destroy the seeds in mature fruits of *Hakea sericea* they reduce the quantity of seeds available for regeneration after fires. Field observations indicate that the seed-moth can destroy up to 80% of the accumulated seeds at some sites.



Adult hakea seed-moth on a hakea fruit



Eggs of the hakea seed moth



Larva of the hakea seed-moth inside a hakea fruit



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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PHONE: Weedbuster Toll-free Helpline: 0800 005 376**  
**WEBSITE: PPRI website is located via links from the Agricultural Research Council website: [www.arc.agric.za](http://www.arc.agric.za)**

