

# Biological Control of Mimosa

## MACARIA

### Leaf Feeding Moth

January 2018

*Macaria pallidata* is the scientific name of the pale brown moth commonly called macaria. It is native to Mexico and was introduced to the Northern Territory in 2002 after three years of quarantine testing, to help control mimosa.

Macaria caterpillars (larvae) can look quite similar to the caterpillars of leuciris, which is another moth that is a biological control agent for mimosa. Macaria can now be found on mimosa infestations across the Northern Territory.

The macaria caterpillars feed on the leaves of mimosa, reducing its ability to grow and produce seed. The feeding also increases mimosa's susceptibility to disease, and generally decreases the cost and increase the effectiveness of other control measures.



Macaria Adult

Macaria caterpillars have been found to cause severe defoliation.

Adult female macaria moths lay batches of blue coloured eggs which hatch into small caterpillars and feed on the leaves of mimosa as they grow. Caterpillars can be either brown or green and move in a looping motion. Full-grown caterpillars, may reach 2.5cm in length before they crawl down into the soil or leaf litter to pupate, emerging as moths after about six days. The full life cycle takes about 21 days.



Leuciris caterpillar



Macaria caterpillar



Mimosa with defoliation caused by macaria



Egg



Caterpillars



Pupae

For more information contact **Weed Management Branch**

**Darwin:** 8999 2380

**Tennant Creek:** 8962 4314

**Web:** [www.nt.gov.au/weeds](http://www.nt.gov.au/weeds)

**Katherine:** 8999 2380

**Email:** [weedinfo@nt.gov.au](mailto:weedinfo@nt.gov.au)