Biological Control of Mimosa

NEUROSTROTA

Stem Boring Moth

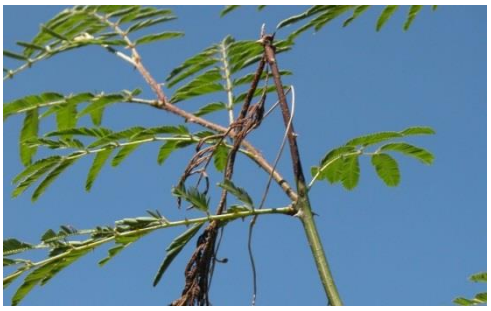
January 2018

Neurostrota Adult

Neurostrota gunniella is the scientific name of the moth commonly known as neurostrota. Neurostrota is native to Mexico and was introduced into the Northern Territory in 1989 after three years of quarantine testing.

Neurostrota is a tiny coppery-brown coloured moth that has a creamy-white stripe down its back. An adult moth may travel many kilometres to find a suitable mimosa plant to lay its eggs on.

Small caterpillars (larvae) mine through mimosa leaves, reducing the plant's ability to photosynthesise. Larger caterpillars bore into the stems of mimosa and travel up and down damaging the stems and causing leaf drop and tip death.



Mimosa impacted by Neurostrota

Mimosa leaves mined by young caterpillars

Neurostrota is well established and can be found impacting on nearly every mimosa plant in the Northern Territory.

Moths lay about 80 eggs which hatch after four days into caterpillars that are blue. They feed inside the leaves before tunnelling through the leaf stem into the main mimosa stem. Caterpillars bore in and out of stems for about three weeks, creating exit holes surrounded by sawdust (frass). They pupate for seven days before emerging as adults. The lifecycle takes about 30 days.

Exit holes caused by stem borer caterpillars

Caterpillar (stem borer)

Pupae

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NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT