

Pectinophora gossypiella

Pink Boll Worm



Resting pose



FIELD SCREENING AID



Photo by J. Brambila

Life size

Wingspan: 12.7 to 20 mm (~½ to ¾ in)

Forewing:

- mottled brown or grayish-brown with poorly defined black spots
- narrow and with apex pointed
- length approximately 7.0-8.5 mm

Hindwing:

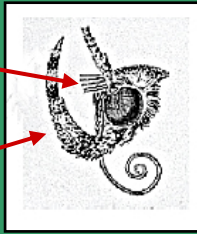
- grayish-brown
- with distal margin concave and apex pointed
- with margins fringed, the fringe lighter in color than the wing

***Pectinophora gossypiella* (Saunders) (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae) is very similar in size and appearance to numerous other moths, some of which are also attracted to the *P. gossypiella* pheromone. Therefore, dissections of the genitalia are required for authoritative identifications.**

These screening aids were produced by Julieta Brambila (USDA/APHIS/PPQ) with assistance from Dr. Ronald W. Hodges (USDA/ARS/SEL) and Dr. Michelle Walters (USDA/APHIS/PPQ) for CAPS (Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey program). These screening aids are based in a large part on a 2006 presentation by Ernie Miller (USDA/APHIS/PPQ). Dr. Richard Brown (Mississippi Entomological Museum) provided the pinned specimen. The photograph of the moth in its natural position was taken by Dr. Jack K. Clark (University of California, Davis).

pecten

labial
palp

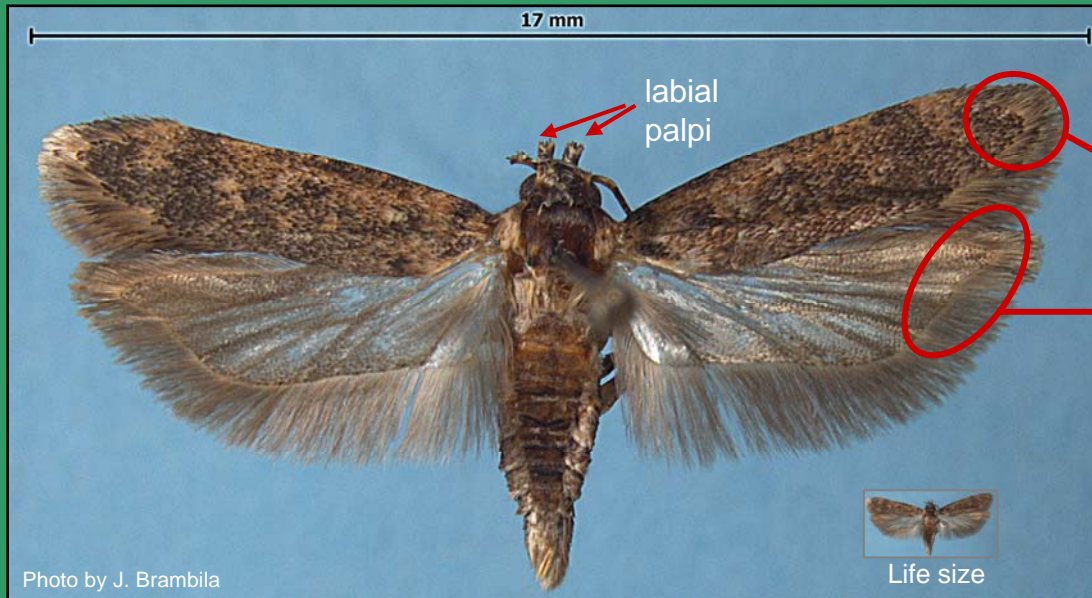


Lateral view of head

Pectinophora gossypiella

Pink Boll Worm

DIAGNOSTIC AID



Wingspan: 12.7 to 20 mm (~ 1/2 to 3/4 in)

Forewing:

- narrow, mottled brown or grayish-brown with poorly defined black spots, with apex pointed and fringed, and approximately 6.3-8.7 mm in length in males, 6.9-10 mm in length in females.

Hind wing:

- with apex pointed, margin concave below the apex, and entire margin fringed.

Labial palpi:

- long and curved upward, their second joint with two black horizontal bands.

Antennae:

- with a series of 5 to 7 long and stiff setae forming a pecten ventrally on the first segment.

The wing color of *Pectinophora gossypiella* (Saunders) (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae) is not diagnostic and the wing shape is similar to that in other gelechiid moths, some of which are also attracted to the *P. gossypiella* pheromone. The combination of long and stiff setae at the base of the antennae along with two black bands on the long labial palpi are diagnostic, but are difficult to see or not present in specimens collected in sticky traps. Therefore, dissections of the genitalia are required for authoritative identifications. Illustrations of the male and female genitalia can be found in A. Busck (1917), The pink bollworm, *Pectinophora gossypiella*. Journal of Agricultural Research, 9 (10): 343-370.