

## CONFUSING CATERpillARS

APRIL 2020

There are a few caterpillars around at the moment in response to the favourable seasonal conditions i.e. moisture (meaning new growth on plants) and warmth. The adult butterflies or moths etc. did not emerge earlier because it was too dry and they are now making the most of what is left of the season. The eggs are usually laid on succulent new growth and the warmth helps them to hatch.

To try and distinguish them, it helps to notice what plants they are feeding on as they tend to be quite specific. How they find your particular plants in the first place, especially in a new rural garden, is a mystery to me!

### GRAPEVINE MOTH CATERPILLAR. (*Phaenoides glycinae*)

Feed on – grape vine leaves (both ornamental and fruiting), fuchsias and some native plants such as Hibbertia spp.

- often very numerous, usually on underside of leaf and can defoliate a vine.
- tend to drop down on a thread when disturbed.
- often kept in check by predators but leaves can be sprayed with dipel if necessary.

### GARDENIA BEE HAWK MOTH CATERPILLAR. (*Cephonodes kingii*)

Very similar in appearance to above but has a horn on it's rear section.

- feeds mostly on Gardenias (*G. jasminoides*) but has been found on some Australian native plants, including *Pavetta australiensis* (Butterfly bush), *Canthemium spp* (Australian native myrtle, Coast Canthium, Perfumed Canthium, Wild lemon), Australian Native gardenia and Scented Gardenia.
- relatively uncommon and not usually in great numbers. Found over much of Australia.
- the eggs are usually single, pale green and on undersides of leaves.
- the caterpillar changes colour and spots as it grows. This link explains the life cycle – <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/sphi/kingii.html>

### SMALL CITRUS BUTTERFLY CATERPILLAR (*Papilio anactus*)

- feeds on all *Citrus spp* including cultivated species and native species.
- grow to about 45mm long and can consume considerable amounts of foliage.
- eggs and caterpillars can usually be removed by hand or spray with Dipel



Gardenia Bee Hawk Moth Caterpillar



Grapevine Moth Caterpillar

