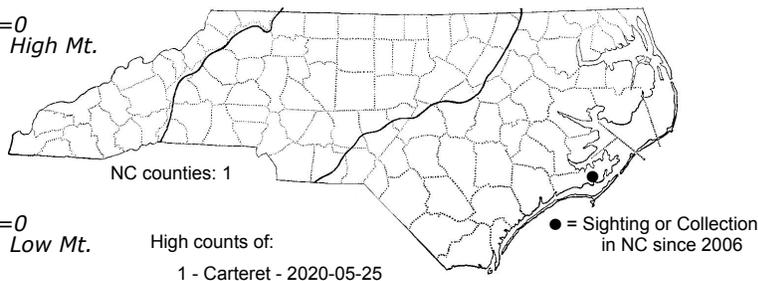
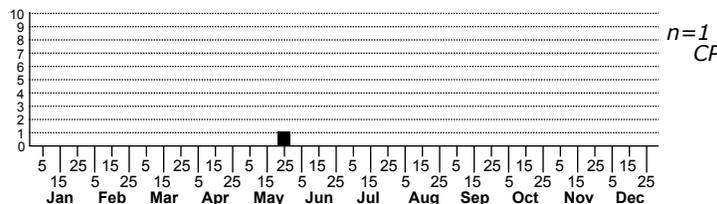


Symmetrischema capsica Pepper Flowerbud Moth



Status	Rank
NC	US
NC	Global



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: *Symmetrischema* is a genus of New World moths with over 50 described species. They all feed on members of the Solanaceae, and some are significant pests on commercial crops.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The adults have a mixture of yellowish-brown, pale white, and dark-brown scales on the head, thorax and forewing that produce an overall finely-mottled, yellowish-brown or whitish-brown appearance. The labial palp is tan-colored with dark-brown rings, with the second segment having three dark rings at the base, middle, and apex, and the third segment having a subterminal and basal ring. The antenna has alternating dark brown and pale annulations. The forewing is light yellowish-brown with a series of dark-brown spots and short, longitudinal dashes. These include a basal spot along the inner margin, three sub-basal spots at around one-fourth the wing length that form a fragmented fascia of sorts, and a series of diffuse blotches and longitudinal dashes in the subcostal region that extend from the sub-basal fascia to the apex. The hindwing is brown and the fringe on both wings is well-developed and thick.

DISTRIBUTION: This species is native to the Caribbean region, but is well established in the Gulf Coast region, particularly the Rio Grande Valley and Florida. As of 2025, we have a single record from Fort Macon State Park.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The flight season is poorly documented, with records extending from May through September. AS of 2025, our one record is for 25 May.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally associated with agricultural fields where cayenne peppers are grown, and in disturbed sites with ground cherries.

FOOD: Larvae reportedly feed on *Capsicum* species (Robinson et al., 2010), including Cayenne Pepper (*C. annum*), but also use ground cherries (*Physalis* spp.).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found in the fruits of peppers and ground cherries.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This is an introduced pest on peppers and does not merit protection.