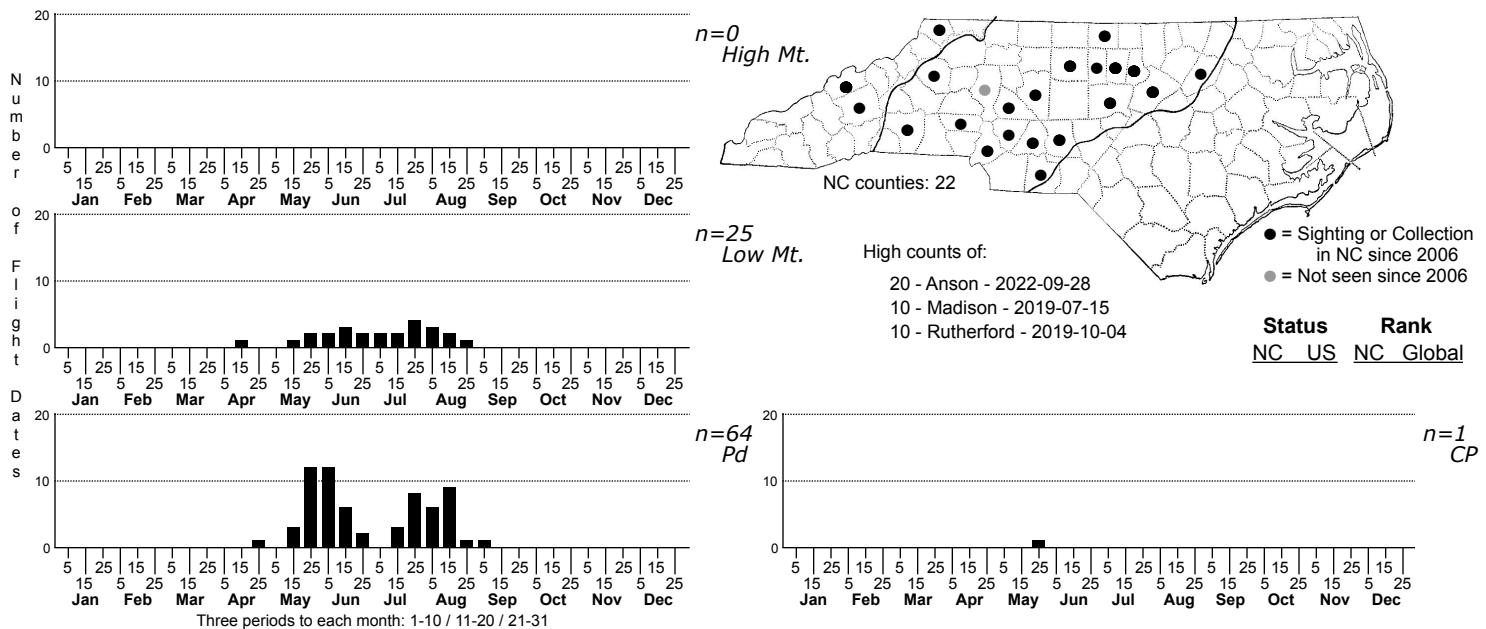


# *Fascista cercerisella* Redbud Leaffolder Moth



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE: Gelechiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Fascista* contains only three species, and all are found in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Leckie and Beadle (2018)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Chambers, 1872.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Adults are easily recognized by the dark-brown to velvety black forewing that has boldly patterned white spots. The labial palp, head, and collar are white. The third segment of the palp is white except at the base, and the antenna is dark. The forewing has four large white spots. These include a relatively large spot or bar at about one-fourth the wing length that extends inward to the fold, a smaller costal spot at about three-fifths, and a costal and opposing dorsal spot in the subapical region. A few whitish specks are sometimes present at the base of the fringe. The costal cilia are brown basally and whitish apically. The hindwing is pale drab and faintly pink tinged along the costa and near the anal angle (Forbes, 1923). *Fascista quinella* is similar, but has a pair of costal and dorsal spots just beyond the middle of the forewing, instead of a single costal spot as seen in *Fascista cercerisella*.

DISTRIBUTION: The Redbud Leaffolder is common throughout much of the eastern US and in adjoining areas of extreme southern Canada. In North Carolina, this species appears to be largely restricted to the Piedmont and lower to mid-elevations of the Blue Ridge where natural populations of Eastern Redbud occur. Natural populations of Eastern Redbud are uncommon in the Coastal Plain, and we do not have any records of the Redbud Leaffolder from these sites. This species is known to occur in the Coastal Plain on ornamental redbud plants, but we also have no official records for these to date.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Populations in the eastern US often have 2-3 overlapping broods per year. Populations in the Piedmont appear to have at least two broods per year, while records from the mountains are insufficient to determine brood patterns.

HABITAT: This species is strongly associated with Eastern Redbud, which reaches its greatest abundance in dry to moist forests and forest edges with circumneutral soils. Eastern Redbud is widely planted as an ornamental and is also common in sunny openings and along roadways.

FOOD: *Fascista cercerisella* is monophagous and occurs only where there are local populations of Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), which has been confirmed as the host in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Adults are attracted to black lights and mercury vapor lights. The conspicuous folded leaves on Eastern Redbud are easy to spot, and identification can be further verified by checking the leaves for the boldly patterned larvae inside.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S4S5

STATE PROTECTION: Has no legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: