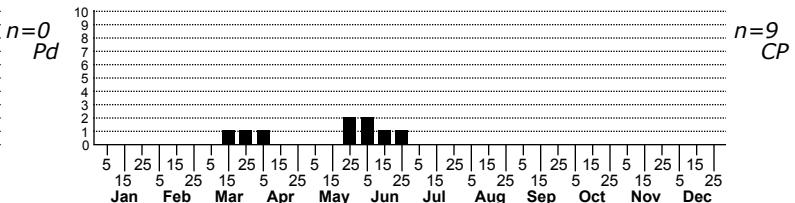
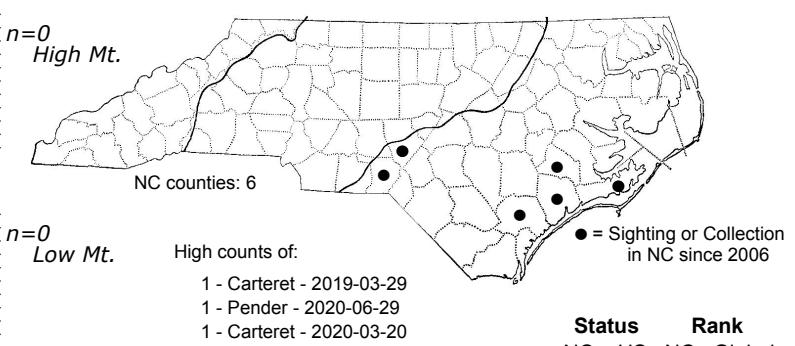


# Dichomeris vacciniella None



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomeridinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: <i>Dichomeris</i> is a large genus with several hundred species that occur throughout the world. Hodges (1986) recognized 74 species in North America north of Mexico, with 19 species groups. Most are leaf tiers and they use a taxonomically diverse array of plant hosts, including members of 18 families of plants in North America. As of 2025, North Carolina has 35 documented species, and at least one undescribed species from the Sandhills.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Darlington (1952)

ID COMMENTS: <i>Dichomeris vacciniella</i> is conspicuously flattened, with the forewings varying from dark-brown to shining reddish-brown or russet. The forewing has numerous dark flecks, and there is a series of parallel, antemedial, median and postmedial dark dots. When paired, the dot closer to the inner margin is displaced more basally relative to the other dot. The median pair is marginated with a few white scales on the distal margin, while the post-medial dot is marginated with white scales either on the proximal margin or both margins. The antemedial dots are often missing or masked by a diffuse, blackish, diagonal band that terminates near the center of the wing, while the postmedial typically consists of a single dot. The wing is often heavily dusted with blackish scales in the subterminal region and in the region just posterior to the postmedial dot. The hindwings are grayish and broadly darker along the margins and at the base of the fringe (Darlington, 1952; Hodges, 1986). The labial palps, frons and head are mainly dark brownish-gray when view from above and are noticeably darker than the ground color of the thorax and forewings. The antenna shaft has pale-brown bands that alternate with dark-brown bands, while the legs are mostly black with yellowish tarsal annulations.

<i>Dichomeris vacciniella</i> can be confused with <i>D. ventrellus</i>, but in the latter the head and labial palps are about the same color as the thorax and forewing, versus being noticeable darker in <i>D. vacciniella</i>. <i>Dichomeris ventrellus</i> also lacks the heavy blackish dusting in the subterminal region of the forewing, and usually does not have a diffuse, dark, diagonal, antemedial band near the wing base. Specimens of <i>D. vacciniella</i> are occasionally found that lack the heavy dark dusting and are best identified by the noticeable darker head and palps.

DISTRIBUTION: <i>Dichomeris vacciniella</i> occurs in Nova Scotia, southern Quebec and Ontario, and in a substantial portion of the eastern US where specimens have been documented from Maine southwestward through the Appalachian region to eastern Tennessee, then continuing on to Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, southeastern Texas, western Arkansas and Missouri. A second cluster of populations occurs in the Coastal Plain from central Florida northward to North Carolina, Maryland and New Jersey. There are also scattered records from northern Michigan and Wisconsin. This species appears to be absent from much of the area between the Appalachians and the Atlantic Coast from Virginia southward. As of 2025, our records are all from the Coastal Plain, including the Sandhills and communities near the coast.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed during most months of the year in different areas of the range, with the seasonal peak in March through May, and another from July through October. Populations in most areas appear to be univoltine, with the first peak likely reflecting overwintering adults. As of 2025, our records are from mid-March to late-June, with a cluster in mid-March to early April that likely reflect overwintering adults, followed by a second in late-May to late-June that presumably represent adults emerging from the first brood.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally found in areas where native blueberries are well-represented in local communities. Our records come from both peatland and Sandhills habitats in the Coastal Plain. This species is apparently absent from the Blue Ridge, even though blueberries are often locally abundant in many areas.

FOOD: The larvae feed on blueberries (<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.; Darlington, 1952; Hodges, 1986). As of 2025, we have one feeding and rearing record for North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to light to some extent, but many of the museum records are for rearing records from blueberries (Hodges, 1986).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S4

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: