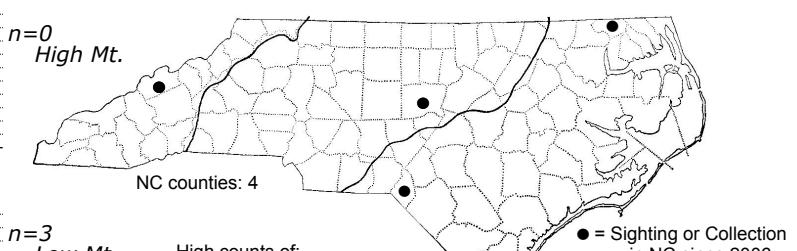
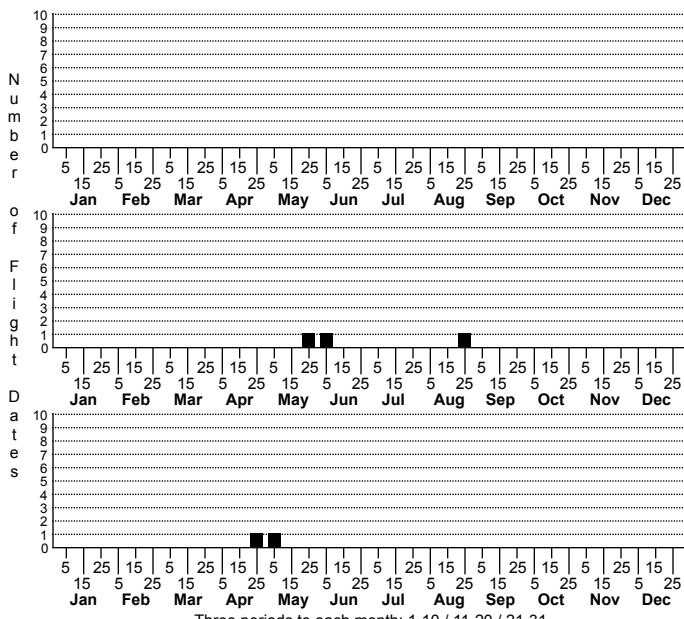


# Dichomeris juncidella Orange-spotted Dichomeris



High counts of:  
 1 - Gates - 2013-09-13  
 1 - Madison - 2021-05-21  
 1 - Madison - 2023-06-04

Status	Rank		
NC	US	NC	Global

n=1  
CP

FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomeridinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Dichomeris* 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: Murtfeldt (1874).

ID COMMENTS: *Dichomeris juncidella* has an overall dark-brown to blackish-brown color that contrasts sharply with its yellowish-white or orangish-white labial palps. A prominent scale tuft is present on the lower half of the palp, while the top of the head is shining dark gray to nearly black, with intense metallic-yellow reflections (Hodges, 1986). The vertex and occiput are shining dark-gray with yellow and lavender reflections, while the antenna, thorax, forewing and terminal fringe are unicolorous and typically dark-brown to blackish-brown (lighter in worn specimens). The forewing often has a few pale-orange spots that include a light mark on the costal margin at three-fourths the wing length, a few pale scales on the fold at two-thirds the length of the fold, a spot at the end of the cell, and another at two-thirds the length of the cell. Individuals vary in the expression of the spots and some individuals may lack them altogether.

*Dichomeris juncidella* is sometimes confused with *D. agonia*, but the latter tends to be lighter-colored and has yellowish orange labial palps with the first and second segments heavily dusted with grayish-brown scales (Hodges, 1986). The vertex and occiput are yellowish gray, and the spot at the end of the cell is usually pale yellow or yellowish gray and much more prominent than that of *D. juncidella*. *Dichomeris juncidella* also has an outwardly curved, transverse, dark subterminal band on the forewing (often obscure) versus a relatively straight, transverse band on *D. agonia*.

DISTRIBUTION: *Dichomeris juncidella* is found throughout most of the eastern US and in southern Canada (Ontario; Quebec; Nova Scotia). In the US the range extends from Maine southward to central Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, eastern Oklahoma, Iowa, eastern Nebraska, southern Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. As of 2025, we have a few scattered records from all three physiographic provinces.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found during almost every month of the year in different areas of the range, with most from May through September. As of 2025, our very limited records suggest that there could be two broods per year, with the adults first appearing in late-April through early-June, followed by a second emergence in August and September.

HABITAT: Local populations are typically found in old fields, along road corridors, in farmland, and in other open, disturbed habitats that support the host plants.

FOOD: The larvae are generalists and use a taxonomically diverse group of host plants (Hodges, 1986; Loeffler, 1994; Eiseman, 2024; BugGuide). As of 2025, the reported hosts include Common Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), Giant Ragweed (*A. trifida*), Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), Devil's-walkingstick (*A. spinosa*), strawberry (*Fragaria*), Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*), goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.), including Giant Goldenrod (*S. gigantea*), and asters (*Symphytum* spp.). Charley Eiseman and Tracy Feldman also reared this species in North Carolina from a larva on Spanish-needles (*Bidens bipinnata*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found in leaf folds on the host plants.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: