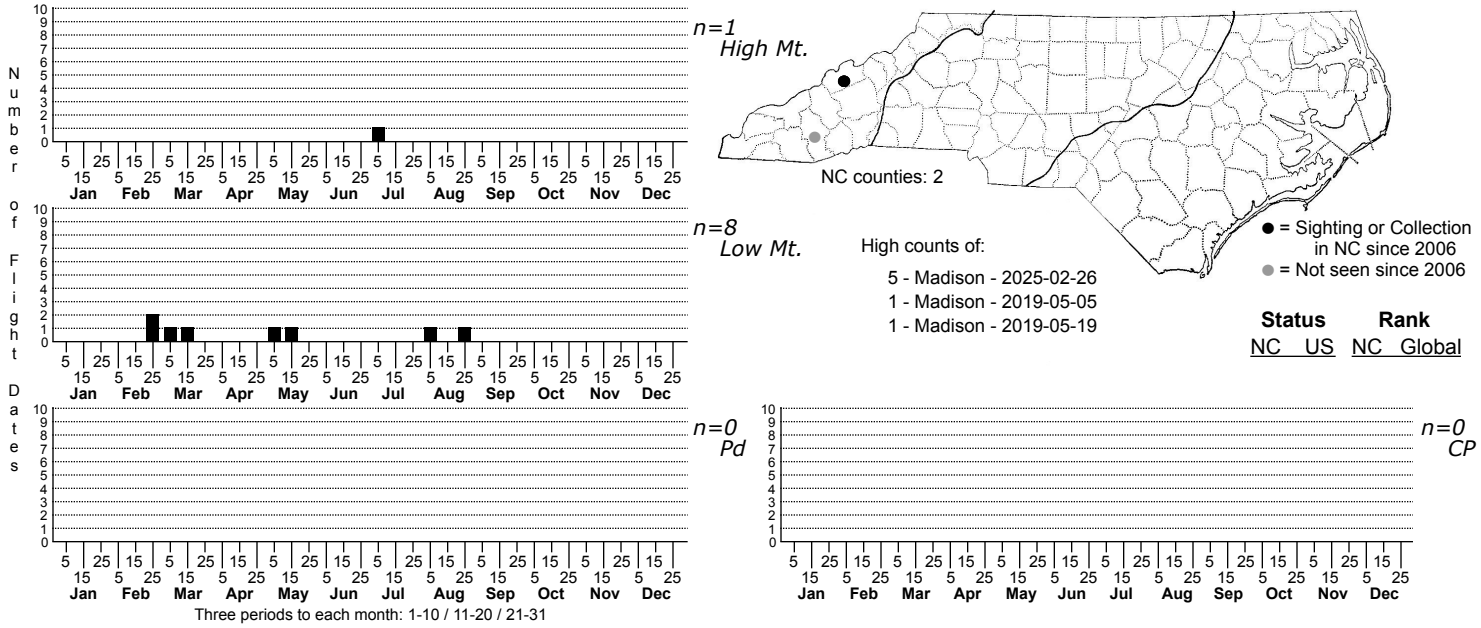
Epermenia albapunctella None



FAMILY: Epermeniidae SUBFAMILY: [Epermeniinae] TRIBE: [Epermeniini]
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Busck (1908)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Eiseman (2019, 2019a)

ID COMMENTS: Epermenia albapunctella is a small moth that is more-or-less uniformly medium-brown to blackish-brown. The most prominent mark is a short, black, longitudinal streak at around three-fifths the wing length with a white dot near its posterior end. The forewings of fresh specimens has two or three patches of erect scales that resemble fish fins when a specimen is viewed from the side.

The following description is based in part on that of Busck (1908). The labial palp is blackish-brown, with the inner side of the second joint ocherous. The face, head, thorax and antenna vary from blackish-brown to medium-brown, with the basal joint of the latter having a strong pecten. The forewing is commonly dark-brown to medium-brown and finely mottled with lighter fuscous, black and brown scales. An ill-defined transverse band of heavy dark dusting is often evident just beyond the middle of the wing. Within this there is a short, black, longitudinal streak at around three-fifths the wing length with a white dot near its posterior end, and an even smaller white dot on the anterior end. A large, erect, scale patch is present just before the middle of the inner margin that is followed by a smaller one beyond the middle, and then by two even smaller ones beyond the second patch. The apical fringe is irregularly mottled and usually has aggegates of black scales. The hindwing is narrow and dark-brown with gray cilia, while the legs are mostly dark-brown, with blackish tarsi that have ocherous annulations.

DISTRIBUTION: Epermenia albapunctella is found in North America in areas with cool climates. It has been documented in Alaska, and in Canada in the the Northwest Territories, and from British Columbia eastward to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In the US the range extends from the New England states westward across the Great Lakes region to Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and southward to southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia and western North Carolina. As of 2025, we have two records from the Blue Ridge that appears to be the southernmost records for this species.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from April through November in different areas of the range. In the Northeast, larvae and pupae have been found beginning in early July, with adults emerging from early July to early August (Eiseman 2019). As of 2025, this species has only been found at two sites in North Carolina. At one lower-elevation site in the Blue Ridge where there has been extensive collecting, the population appears to have two or three broods annually, with the adults flying from late-February through late-August.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are poorly documented, but local populations are generally associated with rich woods with openings.

FOOD: This species has been reported to use several taxa in the Apiaceae (Daucus, Heracleum, Ligusticum, Osmorhiza), as well as Aralia in the Araliaceae (Eiseman 2019, 2019a, 2024). Prentice (1966) also reported it to use conifers in Canada, but that seems unlikely based on other rearing records (Eiseman 2019a). The reported hosts include Bristly Sarsaparilla (Aralia hispida), Wild Sarsaparilla (A. nudicaulis), Queen-Anne's-Lace (Daucus carota), Scotch Lovage (Ligusticum scoticum), Sweet-cicely (Osmorhiza claytonii) and Western Sweet-cicely (O. occidentalis).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found feeding on and mining the leaves of members of the Apiaceae.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S1S2]

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

COMMENTS: This species is rare in North Carolina, with only two records as of 2025. It reaches the southern limit of its range in western North Carolina.