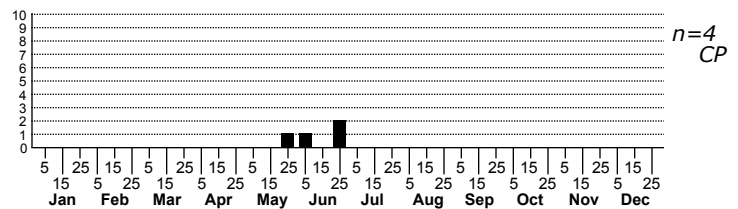
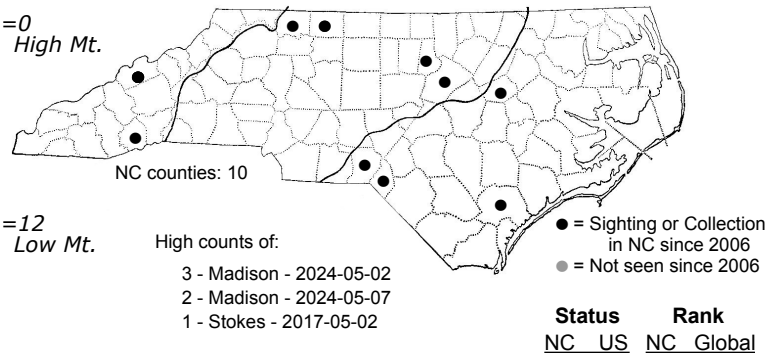
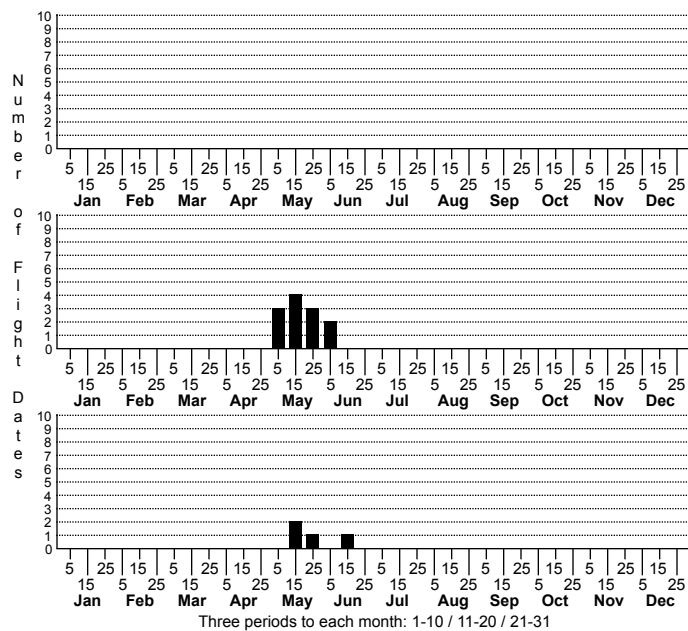


# *Retinia comstockiana* Pitch Twig Moth



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini  
TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Fernald (1879)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Miller and Neiswander (1956)

ID COMMENTS: *Retinia comstockiana* is distinctive among our *Retinia* species in having a heavily frosted head and thoracic region, along with a light orange ground that is overlain with light gray striae. The following description is based on the descriptions by Fernald (1879) and Forbes (1923). The head and palps are white and the antenna dark brown with white annulations. The thorax and tegula are light powdery gray. The forewing has a light orange to ferruginous brown ground color except for a narrow, dark brown costal edge that extends from the base to near the apex. A series of conspicuous, irregular, whitish to leaden-gray striae extend across the wing roughly perpendicular to the costa. These are concentrated in the antemedian and median regions, and are more widely dispersed in the post median region. The fringe is pale grayish-brown, and the legs are rather boldly marked with brownish-black bands on a whitish background. The hindwing varies from very pale grayish-brown to nearly white and has a whitish fringe.

DISTRIBUTION: The Pitch Twig Moth is found in the eastern US and extreme southern Canada (Ontario; Quebec). Populations have been documented from southern Maine to northern Florida, and southwestward through Pennsylvania to southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky and Tennessee to perhaps as far south as eastern Texas. Populations are generally uncommon through most of the Coastal Plain. As of 2022, we have scattered records from all three physiographic provinces.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Populations throughout the range are univoltine with most adults active during May and June. As of 2022, all of our records are from May and June.

HABITAT: Populations are found in pine or mixed pine-hardwood stands.

FOOD: Larvae specialize on pines (Fernald, 1879; Forbes, 1923; Heinrich, 1923; Kimball and Jones, 1943; Schaffner, 1959; Miller, 1978; Lam et al., 2011) and Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*) appears to be the most important host (Miller & Neiswander, 1956). Other known hosts include Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*), Red Pine (*P. resinosa*), Scotch Pine (*P. sylvestris*), and Loblolly Pine (*P. taeda*). A site in Madison County where the adults are regularly taken has Pitch Pine present, which is the presumed host. Populations from outside of the mountains likely use Loblolly Pine.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights. Resinous nodules or other feeding signs are often evident on first-year shoot growth.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S4

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be uncommon in North Carolina. As of 2022 we have fewer than 10 site records for the state.  
March 2026 The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft