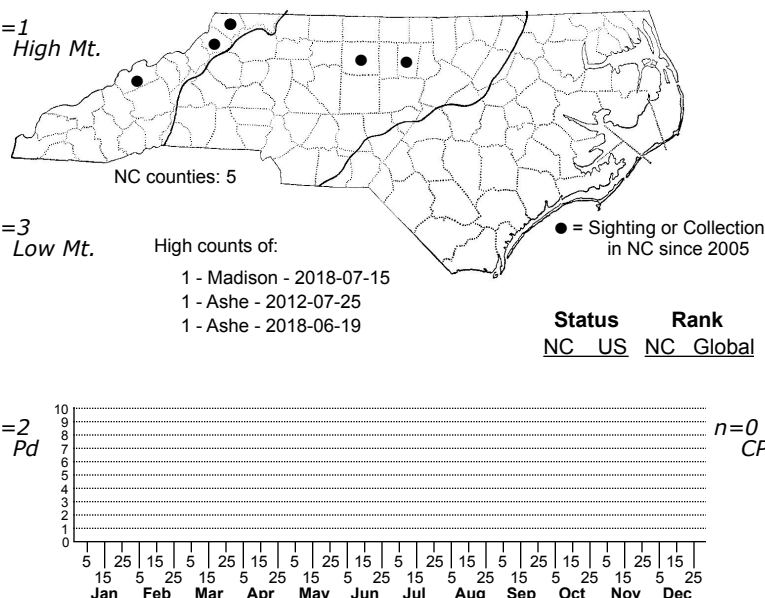
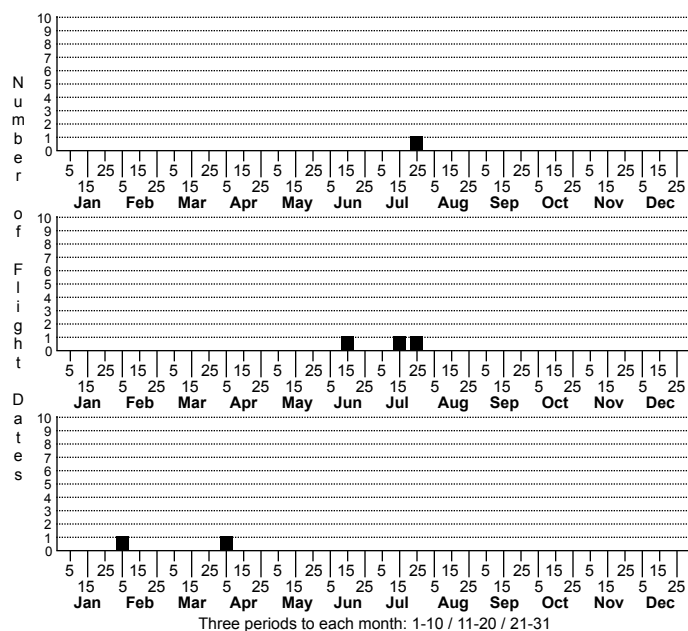


# *Agonopterix alstroemeriana* Poison Hemlock Moth



FAMILY: Depressariidae SUBFAMILY: Depressariinae TRIBE: [Depressariini]

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: *Agonopterix* is a large holarctic genus with more than 125 species, with most occurring in the Palearctic Region. Currently, there are 47 recognized species in North America. Our species are largely confined to the western mountains.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Berenbaum and Passoa, 1983.

ID COMMENTS: The head and palps are creamy white and the antenna creamy white with darker annulations. The ground color of the forewing is light tan to pale brown. The anterior two-thirds of the thorax and the base of the wing are creamy white and form a broad horseshoe-shaped band that extends along the costa before narrowing and terminating at about one-third the wing length. A short chestnut colored streak is present near the mid-wing that adjoins a dark, squarish blotch that extends to the costa. A black discal spot is present just anterior to the chestnut streak. The costa has a series of dark blotches or spots that continue around the apex. This distinctively marked species is difficult to confused with any of our native *Agonopterix* in North Carolina.

DISTRIBUTION: *Agonopterix alstroemeriana* was apparently introduced into the US around 1970 and has rapidly spread through much of North America where conditions are suitable for the establishment of Poison-hemlock. As of 2023, all but one of our records are from the mountains even though Poison-hemlock is relatively common in the Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Populations are univoltine. The adults overwinter and become active with the spring warm-up. Breeding occurs after the host plant has leafed out, and a peak in adult emergence typically occurs in June and July. Smaller numbers of adults can be found throughout the remainder of the year.

HABITAT: Local populations are dependent on Poison-hemlock for successful reproduction. This introduced species can be found growing in low-lying, wet soils along riverbanks and in floodplains, and in a variety of disturbed habitats such as cultivated fields, ditches, fencerows and suburban parks.

FOOD: This species is monophagous on Poison-hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) (Beadle & Leckie, 2012).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae are easy to spot in rolled leaves of Poison-hemlock.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNA

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

COMMENTS: This is an introduced species that only feeds on Poison-hemlock, which is also introduced. As an introduced species, *A. alstroemeriana* does not merit protection.