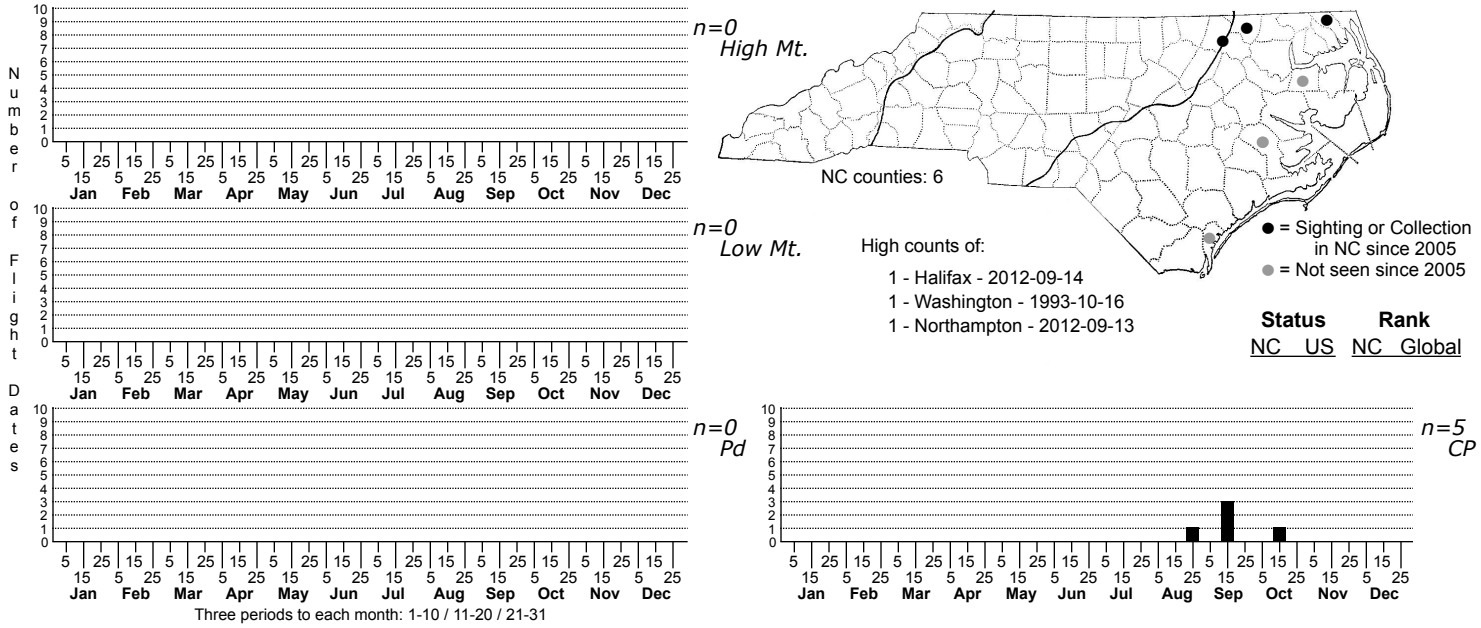
# *Papaipema araliae* Aralia Shoot Borer Moth




FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Apameini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of 44 species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010, 2015), 30 of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Bird and Jones (1921); Forbes (1954)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Bird and Jones (1921); Schweitzer et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized (large for the genus), reddish-yellow, powdery Papaipema. The ground color is yellow but is more-or-less heavily dusted with reddish or purplish scales; spots in the basal area, the reniform, and apex of the wings are undusted, with the reniform usually the same or paler than the ground color. The orbicular and claviform spots are white (the orbicular may be shaded with yellow) and one or two small white spots are located on the anterior side of the reniform; the outer spots are filled with the ground color (Bird and Jones, 1921; Forbes, 1954). Schweitzer et al. (2011) note that individuals of Papaipema arctivorens may be difficult to distinguish from araliae and recommend using proximity to the host plants and range differences to separate the two.

DISTRIBUTION: Modern records in North Carolina come from the northern Coastal Plain; one historic record comes fom the Wilmington area.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, with adults flying in September and October

HABITAT: Two records come from sites within or adjacent to the lower Roanoke floodplain. Aralia is common in that area growing along the ecotones between mesic or bottomland forests and fields and pine stands growing on the adjacent uplands. Two other sites are associated with peatlands, where Aralia commonly grows along logging roads running through pond pine woodlands or non-riverine swamp forests.

FOOD: Larvae are monophagous, feeding solely on Devil's-walkingstick (Aralia spinosa) (Bird and Jones, 1921; Schweitzer et al., 2011). Larvae bore into the terminal stems.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults come to blacklights but larvae are easier to search for: frass ejected from a hole in the stem is conspicuous, as is the dead foliage at the tip (Bird and Jones, 1921).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G3G4 S2S4 [S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: While Aralia spinosa is widespread and occurs in a variety of disturbed or other successional habitats, the moth appears to be much rarer, both rangewide and within North Carolina. The reasons for the small number of records are unknown but there is a possibility that it may be simply be undersurveyed. Searches for larval feeding sign need to be done more systematically in order to more accurately determine the range and distribution of this species.