

# Pest Alert: Banana moth (*Opogona sacchari*)



**Figs 1-4 left to right: Fig 1:** Caterpillars of *Opogona sacchari*. **Fig 2:** Adult banana moth. **Fig 3:** Frass deposits around feeding damage **Fig 4:** Feeding damage. Fig 1 © Fera science Ltd. Figs 2-4 © EPPO.

- ***Opogona sacchari*** is regularly intercepted in the UK on imported ornamental plants and associated growing media (wood chips). It has many hosts and primarily affects **sub-tropical** and **tropical ornamental plants** and **crops**, in **protected cultivation** and is of concern to **nurseries**, **botanical gardens** and **horticultural industries**.
- Originally from the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Africa, this pest has been widely moved in trade and is now present in most tropical and sub-tropical regions as well as **protected cultivation in more temperate regions**. The main pathway for entry into the UK is on **Imported plants for planting**, particularly *Dracaena*, *Yucca*, *Pachira* and *Musa*.
- *Opogona sacchari* has become established under protection in some glasshouses in the UK. Signs to look out for include **leaf wilting** and **stem damage like peeling bark and rot (Fig 4)**, **piles of frass (excrement) under the bark or near feeding holes (Fig. 3)** and **adult moths near light sources in glasshouses (Fig. 2)**. Chemical **control is very difficult** due to the cryptic nature of the larvae (**fig 1**). The best way to manage a population is to remove the affected plants, trap the remaining adults, and implement good biosecurity measures on the premises.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).

**For finds at garden centres, plant nurseries or private gardens in England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:**

Tel: 0300 1000 313

Email: [planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk)

**For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit:**

email: [hort.marketing@gov.scot](mailto:hort.marketing@gov.scot)

**For Northern Ireland, contact the DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:**

Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: [planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Web: [daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health](http://daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health)

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

[planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/](http://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/)

[planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/](http://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/)

[www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls](http://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls)

[www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases)

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)