

Primefact

Pear and cherry slug

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The pear and cherry slug (*Caliroa cerasi*) is the larval stage of the sawfly *Caliroa cerasi*. It is a pest of pear and cherry trees.

Pest identification

Pear and cherry slugs are easily identified as dark-brown to black slugs (Figure 1) or leech-like larvae approximately 5–10 mm long.

Damage

The larvae damage pear and cherry trees by feeding on the upper surfaces of leaves, resulting in a skeletonised appearance. Severe infestations will deplete the trees' photosynthetic capacity, affecting shoot and fruit growth. Pear and cherry slug infestations are common throughout the growing season, but can also accelerate after harvest (particularly in cherry orchards) when the whole of the tree canopy can brown off prematurely.



Figure 1. Adult pear and cherry slug.

Monitoring

Watch for pear and cherry slug activity while working in the orchard throughout the season. Early detection can help prevent significant leaf damage.

Management

Cultural and physical: cultural controls for this pest in the commercial-scale orchard are limited, particularly if slugs are present throughout the orchard. However, if found on only a small number of trees and in low numbers, slugs can be physically removed or washed off with a jet of water.

Biological: pear and cherry slugs are often controlled by naturally occurring predators. Encouraging biological control agents such as hoverflies and lacewings in your orchard will help control.

Check the [APVMA PubCRIS database](https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris) for registered controls (<https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris>).

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