

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Apple Ermine Moth (*Yponomeuta malinellus*)

Order: Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Family: Yponomeutidae (Ermine Moths)

Genus: *Yponomeuta*

Species: *Yponomeuta malinellus*

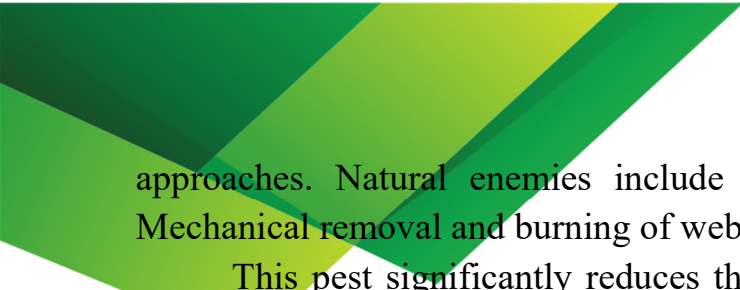
The apple ermine moth is one of the most serious pests of fruit orchards, especially apple trees. The forewings of adults are white with many small black dots.



Due to this appearance, they are sometimes referred to by similar common names in different regions. The caterpillars live in large colonies. They build extensive silken webs that cover branches and leaves. These webs serve both as protection and as a living space. A single web can contain hundreds of caterpillars.

The larvae feed on leaves and can completely defoliate trees. During mass outbreaks, they may destroy entire apple orchards. The caterpillars are yellowish-gray with black spots. In spring, when buds begin to open, the larvae become active. They first feed inside the leaves by creating “mines,” and later switch to external feeding and web construction.

In June, the larvae pupate, usually inside communal silk webs. After some time, adult moths emerge. Females lay eggs on smooth branches and cover them with a protective secretion that hardens into a shield-like structure, protecting the eggs from winter cold. Although larvae may hatch in autumn, they overwinter under this protective cover. Control methods include both biological and chemical



approaches. Natural enemies include parasitic wasps and some bird species. Mechanical removal and burning of webs is also effective.

This pest significantly reduces the photosynthetic ability of trees. Severely damaged trees enter winter weakened and may even die. Monitoring in spring is very important for orchard management.

The species is widely distributed across Europe and Asia. It produces one generation per year. Population outbreaks often occur cyclically, for example every 10 years.

