

Western Grapeleaf Skeletonizer

The Western Grapeleaf Skeletonizer (WGLS) is a voracious feeder that can cause extensive damage to grapevines, including partial or complete defoliation. Excessive feeding can damage fruit and lead to secondary fungal damage and rot of grape clusters. The adult moths are a metallic blue or a greenish black color, while the destructive larval stage is yellow with purple and black bands.

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office traps for WGLS throughout the Napa County from May through October. In June 2015, a single moth, believed to be a "hitchhiker," was found in a trap in Calistoga. An additional 25 delimitation traps were placed in the area for the rest of the season, and no other moths were detected. Although WGLS is not native to Napa County, it has been found here a number of times in the past, most recently in a Mt. Veeder Road vineyard in 2007.

Growers are asked to contact the Ag Commissioner's Office if they discover WGLS or any other unusual pests in the vineyards.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

No Additional Western Grapeleaf Skeletonizers Found Since June 2015 Detection

Following a June 24, 2015, discovery of an adult Western Grapeleaf Skeletonizer (WGLS) in a vineyard trap next to Tubbs Lane in Calistoga, Ag Commissioner staff deployed 25 additional delimitation traps in the area surrounding the find in an attempt to discover the point of origin.

Through the trapping season that concluded at the end of October, no additional WGLS traps were caught in Napa County, including the Calistoga area. As in the case of previous finds, it is theorized that this individual was probably a single “hitchhiker” that accidentally entered the county and not representative of a new infestation. The additional traps will again be deployed during each of the next three seasons to confirm that notion.

All larval life stages of WGLS are voracious feeders that cause extensive damage to grape leaves, including partial or complete defoliation of grapevines. Excessive feeding can damage fruit and lead to secondary fungal damage and rot of grape clusters. The adult moths are a metallic blue or a greenish black color, while the destructive larval stage is yellow with purple and black bands.

Although WGLS is not native to Napa County, it has been found here a number of times in the past, most recently in a Mt. Veeder Road vineyard in 2007. Native to Arizona and New Mexico, it was first discovered in California in the 1940s and eventually spread throughout the state, particularly in the Central Valley. Growers are asked to contact the Ag Commissioner’s Office if they discover WGLS or any other unusual pests in the vineyards.