

## Host Range and Taxonomy of Hairy Caterpillars (Erebidae: Lepidoptera) in Different Cropping Ecosystems

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**Abstract :** Studies were conducted to record the occurrence of different species of hairy caterpillar on different host plants in and around Shivamogga, Karnataka, India. Twelve genera of hairy caterpillars belonging to Arctiinae and Lymantriinae were recorded on different host plants and reared to adults in laboratory on their respective hosts. The *Porthesia* sp. feed on castor, *Cretonotus gangis* on cocoa, *Perina nuda* on fig, *Pericalia ricini* on pigeon pea, *Utetheisa pulchella* on sunhemp and *Euproctis* sp. on paddy and banana. Illustrations of immature and adults were made to associate them. Along with this, light traps were also set during the rainy season, to capture adults of hairy caterpillars. An illustrated identification key was provided for easy and accurate identification of adult of hairy caterpillars based on their morphological (male genitalia) characters. The study through a light on the existence of sexual dimorphism, polyphagous nature and diapause are the major hindrance in taxonomic identification. Hence, attempts were made to address these issues in the study.

**Keywords :** Erebidae, hairy caterpillars, male genitalia, taxonomy

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