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Bug of the Month Macrocentrus Ancylicivorus



Macrocentrus ancylicivorus, commonly called "Mac", is a parasitic wasp about the size of a large mosquito that seeks out young larvae of small moths and lays a single egg within the caterpillar host.

The egg is deposited within the host by the female wasp, using her long, tube-like ovipositor. The immature parasite grows and develops within the host, taking over the host body and eventually sucking all life out of the host before emerging as a mature wasp.

This gruesome life cycle may seem better suited for a science fiction movie than for a beautiful peach orchard, but these wasps continue to play an important role in keeping Colorado peaches pest free. They seek out and attack the larvae of the Oriental fruit moth and thus prevent this devastating pest from reaching large enough numbers to destroy the peach crop.

They do their job without chemicals, with no harm to humans and cheaply too. The Palisade Insectary has been raising these wasps for over 60 years and every season releases 2-3 million of them into the peach orchards surrounding Palisade.

So next time you eat a 'worm-free' peach from Palisade think about how well Mac are doing their job!

