



## *Beauveria bassiana*

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A number of fungi parasitise and kill various insects and their larvae. *Beauveria bassiana* is present throughout the world and in southwestern Australia, can be found infecting a wide range of arthropod hosts including Helena gum moth (*Opodiphthera Helena*) larvae (*main photo*), weevils (*Acantholopus* sp.), (*inset above left*) and wasp (*Perga* sp.) larvae (*inset above right*).

Species of *Beauveria* are the most common fungi used for biocontrol of insects, and are widely used in horticulture, agriculture and farming. When spores of the fungus come into contact with the host insect's body they germinate, enter the body and grow internally consuming the inner tissues and eventually killing the insect. As the fungus grows it extends firstly from segment joints in the insect body and eventually forms a white mass of fungal material that covers the whole body.

Infected insects can be found at any time of the year, but the above examples were found in autumn when insect larvae are more common.

Derivation of the generic name is uncertain, but the specific name, *bassiana*, honours Agostino Bassi, an Italian entomologist who in 1835 discovered this fungus as the cause of death of silkworms.