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Name change for western bean cutworm

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Name change for western bean cutworm

Abstract

Shakespeare wrote, "What's in a name?" and then he went on talking about roses and smelling sweet. Western bean cutworms don't even come close to smelling sweet--and I know--but they do have a name and that name has changed. One of the standards of zoology is that when organisms are discovered and described in the literature, they are given a binominal name, consisting of two parts--the generic name and specific name.

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Insects and Mites

Name change for western bean cutworm

by Marlin E. Rice, Department of Entomology

Shakespeare wrote, “What’s in a name?” and then he went on talking about roses and smelling sweet. Western bean cutworms don’t even come close to smelling sweet—and I know—but they do have a name and that name has changed.

One of the standards of zoology is that when organisms are discovered and described in the literature, they are given a binominal name, consisting of two parts—the generic name and specific name. Interestingly, there is a set of rules called the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* that dictates how these scientific names are used. The purpose of the *Code* is to provide the maximum universality and continuity when classifying animals according to taxonomic judgment. The *Code* is meant to guide the nomenclature of animals, while leaving the scientist some degree of freedom in naming and classifying new species.

The tribe of moths to which the western bean cutworm belongs was recently revised by a Canadian entomologist. What he determined was that the current generic name was no longer valid and a new generic name should be assigned to the species. The old name, and that which many of us recognized, was *Richia albicosta* Smith [Smith was the author, or describer, of the species]. The new name is *Striacosta albicosta* (Smith) and should be used by anyone working with the insect on a scientific basis.

For any of my entomological colleagues who want to know, the change may be found in: Lafontaine, J. D. 2004. Noctuoidea, Noctuidae (part): Noctuinae, Agrotini in Hodges, R. W., ed., *The Moths of North America*, fasc. 27.1. Allen Press, Inc., Lawrence, KS.



Marlin E. Rice is a professor of entomology with extension and research responsibilities in field and forage crops.

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