

Phaon Crescent, Mat Plant Crescent, *Physiodes phaon* (Edwards) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)¹

Donald W. Hall and Jerry F. Butler²

Introduction

The phaon crescent, *Physiodes phaon* (Edwards), is a common southern crescent that frequents moist open areas. It resembles the pearl crescent that is found in the same areas, but differs by the more checkered fringe on the wings.

Distribution

The phaon crescent is found from coastal North Carolina throughout the southern parts of the Gulf states to southern Texas and westward to Southern California. It strays north to Iowa and Nebraska.

Description

The wingspread is 14 to 16 mm. The upper surface of the wings is brown with orange checker spots (Figure 1) and the front wings have a median white to yellowish band (also visible on the undersides). The undersides of the wings are orange and light tan with blackish brown markings.

Larvae (Figure 2) are variable in color from olive to brown with dark subdorsal bands and white

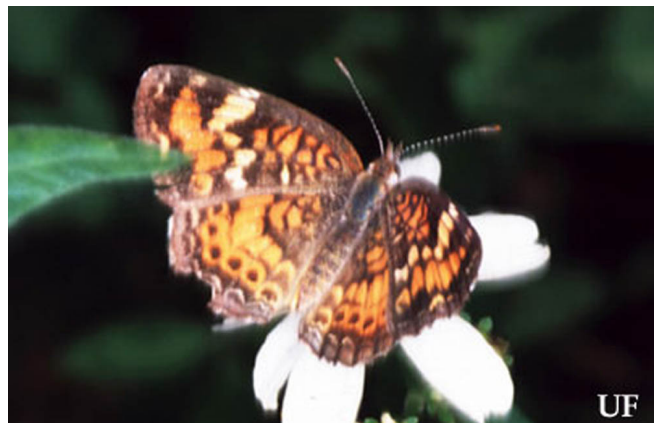


Figure 1. Adult phaon crescent, *Physiodes phaon* (Edwards). Credits: Jerry F. Butler, University of Florida

lateral bands. Both thoracic and abdominal segments have transverse bands of scoli each of which bears brown setae.

Life Cycle

There are several flights (early spring to late fall) in the northern part of the range and nearly year round in peninsular Florida. Males patrol open areas near host plants for females. Mating occurs primarily during mid day. Eggs are laid in clusters on the undersides of leaves of the fogfruit host plants, *Phyla*

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1. This document is EENY-109 (IN266), one of a series of the Entomology and Nematology Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date August 1999. Revised: June 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
 2. Donald W. Hall, professor and Jerry F. Butler, professor, Entomology and Nematology Department, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

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Figure 2. Larva of phaon crescent, *Physciodes phaon* (Edwards). Credits: Jerry F. Butler, University of Florida

(=*Lippia*) spp. (Verbenaceae). The common host throughout much of Florida is turkey tangle fogfruit, *Phyla nodiflora* (L.) Green also known as capeweed, mat plant, creeping charlie, and match heads (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Turkey tangle fogfruit, *Phyla nodiflora* (L.) Green (Verbenaceae). Credits: Donald W. Hall, University of Florida

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