SOME SIGNIFICANT INTERCEPTIONS

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Dacus (Zeugodacus) cucurbitae, the melon fly, ex (?)Canna edulis (khantola) from India. Live larvae which were reared to the adult stage. About 30 adults were reared and were kept alive for three weeks in the laboratory using honey and sugar solution. This is the first occasion we have intercepted this species. The host material is a vegetable and its identity is still subject to confirmation.

This species is known to occur in India, South eastern Asia, the Mariana Islands and Hawaii,. More than 125 species of plants are known as hosts. It has greatly curtailed the production of melons, cucumbers and tomatoes in Hawaii.

A second species of fruit fly was found associated with D. cucurbitae - this has yet to be identified.

Dacus (Bactrocera) dorsalis, the oriental fruit fly. An adult was reared from lychee fruit from Hawaii. The importation of fruit from Hawaii is normally prohibited because of the presence of Oriental fruit fly. This was a trial shipment, which was found infested with larvae. This is believed to be the first time a live adult has been reared. Its interception supports the regulations regarding the prohibition of fruit from Hawaii.

Hypera variabilis

The first record of the interception of this species was during November, 1975 from pomegranates ex U.S.A. The species has now been taken on two further occasions. One specimen from a tent and another from Iris bulbs.-both interceptions this year from U.S.A.

H. variablis is a serious legume pest, especially of lucerne.

Latrodectus hasselti, the red back spider. A live adult female was recently found in a souvenir turtle shell brought back from Australia. A second specimen was taken from a boat and trailer entering New Zealand from Australia.

"Red backs" have now been intercepted on about ten occasions from Australia. In Mascords "Australian Spiders" 13 deaths from bites of "Red backs" are recorded up to 1959. This species is somewhat similar to the Katipo but larger and it has a broader red stripe.

Conotrachelus (?)nenuphar, the plum curculio.

This identification is subject to confirmation. One live larva was found associated with Crataegus seed from Canada- a first interception. Plum curculio is an important pest in North America attacking plum, cherry, peach, apple and other fruits.

Pycnocelus surinamensis, the Surinam cockroach. One live specimen was intercepted in sphagnum moss around plants from Fiji. This species is regarded as being of significance overseas, being known to damage plants in greenhouses. It is also known as the vector of Oxyspirura mansoni, the chicken eyeworm, a nematode.

The food of tunnel web spiders (Porrhothele antipodiana) at Lake Pounui

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During July this year(1978), Fergus Clunie made a brief but commendable study of the diet of the tunnel web spider Porrhothele antipodiana at Victoria University's research area at Lake Pounui Southern Wairarapa. The method followed was that described by Laing(1973). 73 webs were collected and examined for the identifiable prey remains therein. All webs were taken in stands of beech (Nothofagus solandri var. solandri) and were generally found under logs or fallen branches. As with Laing's work, this study supported the view of P. antipodiana as an opportunistic predator. Beetles predominated as food items but other interesting diet records were Phasmatodea (1 web), wetas(Rhaphidophoridae)-3% of the total food items recorded), cicadas (Amphisalta spp.-4% of the prey numerically), Odonata (Xanthocnemis zealandica -3 webs) and earthworms (2 webs). Isopoda formed a very small proportion of the prey (only 0.9% of the total prey items) which supports my own findings that it is difficult to induce even starved P. antipodiana to accept slaters.

Reference

Laing, D. J. 1973. Prey and prey capture in the tunnel web spider, Porrhothele antipodiana. Tuatara 20(2): 57-64

Notes on cannabalism in the larvae of the common blue Zizina otis labradus Godt (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae)

Larvae of Zizina otis labradus Godt, have been reared in the laboratory for the last year as part of an investigation into their population ecology. Z. o. labradus is an accommodating laboratory animal; adults will oviposit freely in small cages (205 mm x 190 mm) and the larvae feed readily on a wide variety of clovers and related plants. However, attempts at rearing up to 10 larvae together in 25ml vials turned out to be hazardous to the animal since cannibalism proved to be a commonplace event in the final (fourth) instar. Z. o. labradus thus joins the long list of lycaenids that display this trait. Cannibalism on the pupa was first witnessed in the vial situation but I have since recorded attacks on pre-pupae and pupae in the larger rearing cages. These attacks took place on the sides of the cage and not merely on the food itself which suggests that their cannibalism is more than accidental.