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**OCCURRENCE OF SWINHOEA VEGETA SWINH (LEPIDOPTERA :
NOCTUIDAE AS A PEST OF SWEET POTATO IN KERALA**

Fletcher (1921) reported the occurrence of *S. vegeta* (Syn. *Cretonia vegeta*) as an insect reared from the larvae found on rice leaves at Delhi. He also recorded that the insect was not doing any injury to the crop. But severe infestation of this insect was noted on sweet potato in some areas of Trivandrum District during 1972. This is the first record of its occurrence in Kerala. Caterpillars of the insect were found voraciously feeding on leaves, often resulting in the complete defoliation of the crop. The forewings of the adult are dark brown in colour and the hind-wings straw coloured. Eggs are laid singly on the underside of the leaves. Full grown caterpillars measure about 18.5 mm. in length and 2.8 mm. across the thorax. They are greyish brown in colour with white spots all over the body. They pupate in leaf folds. The life cycle is completed in 25-28 days.

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REFERENCE

Fletcher, T. B. (1921), Annotated list of Indian Crop Pests, *Agric. Res. Inst. Pusa, Bulletin* No. 100 : 32

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