

## A TYPHLOCYBINE LEAFHOPPER ON BITTERGOURD

Bittergourd is an important vegetable crop of Kerala. The major pests of this crop are fruit fly, *Bactrocera cucurbitae*, leaf beetle *Hemisepilachna vignitioctopunctata* and the leafhopper *Amrasca biguttula biguttula*. Recently, severe incidence of another species of leafhopper occurred in the bittergourd crop of KAU Farm, Vellanikkara during January-March, 1995. Severe 'hopperburn' symptoms appeared on the leaves due to the feeding of this leafhopper. Initially, white spots appeared on the leaves at the feeding sites. This was followed by gradual yellowing of the leaf margins, drying of leaf tips and later complete yellowing and drying of the affected leaves resulting in crop failure.

The leafhoppers were collected and the male genitalia were studied. The species was identified as *Empoasca* (s. str.) *motti* Pruthi (Typhlocybinae : Cicadellidae). *Empoasca* (s. str.) *motti* was described by Pruthi (1940) as a variety of *E. kerri* on potato. Later, it was raised to the species level by Dworakowska (1972).

This is the first report of *E. motti* on bittergourd from India. It was reported from about 50 plant species including cultivated crops and weed plants by several workers (Sohi and Dworakowska, 1983; Mathew and Ramakrishnan, 1995).

The biology of *E. motti*, nature and extent of injury and the symptoms of infestation on potato were studied by Lal (1946 and 1951). On potato, it bred throughout the year, most active during October to March. Nymphs and adults were generally confined to the lower side of the leaves and suck sap from the veins and veinlets. As a result, tips of the affected leaves became brown, margins rolled upward and dried up.

This species was first reported from Kerala by Dworakowska (1981) from light trap collections near Walayar. Later, Mathew and Ramakrishnan (1995) reported the same on groundnut, sesamum, daincha, mulberry, cowpea and seven weed plants.

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