

HAIRY CATERPILLAR *EUCHROMIAPOLYMENA* LINN. - A SERIOUS PEST OF *TYLOPHORA INDICA* (BURM.F.) MERR. AND *IPOMOEA MAURITIANAJACQ.*

Severe attack of the hairy caterpillar *Euchromia polymena* Linn. was observed on *Tylophora indica* (Burm.f.) Merr. and *Ipomoea mauritiana* Jacq., two important medicinal plants of Kerala.

The leaves of *T. india* (locally known as 'Vallippala' and 'Swasagni' in Sanskrit) is acclaimed to have emetic, diaphoretic and expectorant properties. *J. mauritiana* (locally known as 'Palmuthukku') produces tuberous roots having galactogogue and anti-rheumatic properties.

Adults lay eggs in masses of 80 to 100 on the underside of leaves. The

emerging hairy caterpillars feed on the foliage and become full grown in about four weeks, undergoing six instars. The middle and later instars feed voraciously on the plants leaving only the vines. Complete devastation of the plants was observed during October-November, 1989 in the medicinal plant garden of the College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara.

Hampson (1976) reported the pest on plants of the family *Convolvulaceae*, from India, Ceylon, China and Andamans. Ayyar (1963), Nair (1975) and David and Kumaraswamy (1978) recorded it as a pest of sweet potato.

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