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RECORD OF *RHINOCORIS FUSCIPES* (FABR.) (HETEROPTERA :
REDUVIIDAE) AS A PREDATOR OF *MYLLOCERUS CURVICORNIS* (F.)
(COLEOPTERA:CURCULIONIDAE), THE ASH WEEVIL PEST
OF THE COCONUT PALM

Rhinocoris fuscipes (Fabr.) , reduviid predator was observed in the field feeding on the curculionid ash weevil *Myloccerus curvicornis* (F.) recorded by Kurien *et al* 1976 (under publication), as a new serious pest of coconut foliage. It is a medium sized bug with brick red body and black wings. The black oval area distally on the dorsal aspect of the abdomen is characteristic of this bug. *R. fuscipes* has been reported as a predator on the caterpillars of *Laphygma exigua* Hb. (Cherian, 1937), *Peregrinus maidis* Ashm. (Cherian and Kylasm, 1939), daincha caterpillars (Cherian and Brahmachari, 1941), larvae of *Diacrisia obi/qua* Walker (Singh and Gangrade, 1974), *Heliothis armigera*, *Spodoptera litura*, *Semiothisa pervolgata*, *Terias hecabe* and *Catopsilia pyranthe*, beetles *Epilachna vigintiocto punctata* and *Raphidopalpa foveicollis* and the bug *Leptocoris acuta* (Nayar *et al* 1976). This is the first record of *R. fuscipes* as a predator of *M. curvicornis*.

The adult on coming close to the weevil, jumps over it and subdues the prey. It then holds the prey by its forelegs and inserts the rostrum into one of the legs. Within a few minutes the weevil becomes inactive. Afterwards the bug retrieves the rostrum and thrusts it into the soft parts of the body like the collar, pleura and anus and sucks the body fluid. The bug took nearly half an hour for feeding on one adult *Myloccerus* and it fed on an average two weevils per day under laboratory conditions. The fifth instar nymphs of the bug also fed on the adult weevils. The bug laid 40-75 elongated cylindrical eggs in batches. The incubation period was 8 days. The nymphal period ranged from 31 -44 days in five instars. It was amenable to laboratory rearing on the larvae of *Corcyra cephalonica*. The potentiality of the predator as a promising biocontrol agent against *M. curvicornis* is being explored.

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