

RICANIA FENESTRATA FABRICIUS—A POTENTIAL PEST OF COTTON

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Ricania fenestrata Fabricius (Ricanidae, Hemiptera) is reported by Hutson (1919) and Light (1929) as one of the minor pests of tea in Ceylon. Chattarjee and Bose recorded this insect on the forest plants like *Canthium didymum*, *Santalum album* and *Zizyphus oenoplia* in South India. Puttarudriah and Maheswariah (1954) noted it as a pest of *Jasminum flexile*, Vahl.-Var. *travancorensis* around Bangalore and listed garden and vegetable plants like *Aganosoma dichotoma*, *Jasminum auriculatum*, *Erythrina indica*, *Citrus decumana*, *Rosa centifolia*, *Dahlia variabilis*, *Canna indica*, *Solanum melongana*, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, etc., as its host plants particularly when they are closely situated to Jasmine. They have also worked out its biology and habits on Jasmine.

During the month of December 1957 the writers observed *R. fenestrata* Fabricius

assuming the position of a potential pest on cotton, in the Laboratory compound. Eggs in large numbers were found inserted within the tissues of stalks, midribs and veins of cotton leaves and even of young and tender shoots of cotton plants by making slits (Figs. 1-2) by the ovipositors of adult females. Number of nymphs (Fig. 1a) of all instars and adults were found to be actively feeding by sucking the sap of the plant causing disfiguration and later dying up of attacked parts. Nymphs collected from the field were successfully reared to adults on cotton leaves in the Laboratory. (Figs. 3-4).

The appearance of this insect on cotton, though observed for the first time, seem to be becoming common and the damage caused to the crop shows that it may assume the status of a serious pest. Further studies on this insect with reference to the host plant are under way.

References

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3. Puttarudriah, M. and Maheswariah, B.M., (1954), "A Note on the biology and habits of *Ricania fenestrata* Fabricius, A new pest on Jasmine," *The Mysore Agri. Journal*, Vol. XXX, No. 1, pp. 12—15.