

PESTS OF COCONUT

By K. Mathen ‡

Introduction Coconut has lot of guests,
Four among them major pests;
Beetle black, leaf caterpillar,
Weevil red and cockchafer.

rhinoceros beetle description Beetle has a horn on scalp,
Males in greater length possess,
Like a mammal's, curved and sharp,
Hence we call it rhinoceros.

breeding sources Cattle dung and peaty heaps,
Logs of palms and compost pit,
Decaying organic debris.
Are the insect's breeding sites.



Three adult specimens of Rhinoceros beetle.

damage and symptoms Beetle is the harmful stage,
Bores thro' spathes and tender fronds,
Eaten leaves get geometric wounds,
Flowers suffer loss and damage.

control mechanical

To bring them down in numbers fast,
Extract them with beetle hooks;
An able check described in books,
And practised from the ages past.

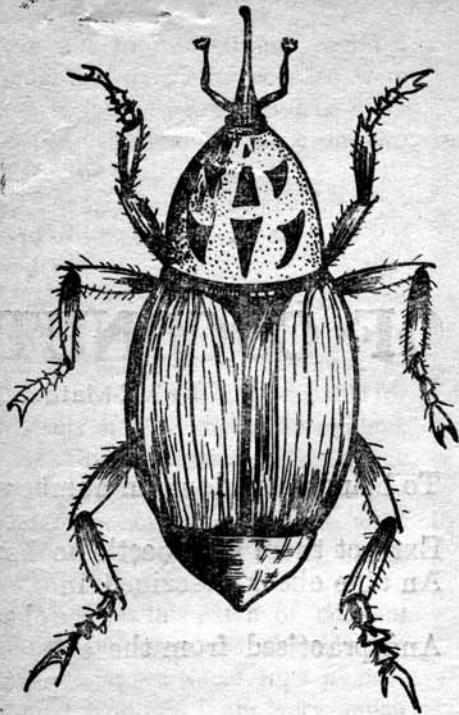


Rhinoceros Grubs thrive on cowdung heap.

chemical Gammaxane doth keep in check
A link in chain of life it breaks,
With cowdung if its mixture makes,
Killing growth of grubs in manure pack.

economics If all the farmers practise it,
Far too more than solve a problem,
It enhances yield of nuts at
Five to six a palm per annum.
The red palm weevil *Rhynchophorus*,
Leaves behind a problem for us,
The tissue borer dwells hidden,
And strikes to kill with ease sudden.

‡ Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Regional Station, Kayangulam, Kerala State.



Red Palm Weevil

life cycle
and extent
of damage

Eggs are laid in wounds and
axils,
Hatching grubs in tunnelling go,
Finding way while eating thro',
The palm at length the insect
kills.

symptoms
of attack

Palms below the age of twenty,
Mostly get attacked in plenty;
Signs of attack left are few,
Palms may stand as good as new.
Little holes on stem it leaves,
Splitting up of base of leaves,
Oozing out of fluid brown,
Wilting of the leaves on crown,

control

One can these signs count upon
As clues to presence of the pest;
If you want to save the host,
Inject it with Pyrocon
Recent work has brought to
light,
At little less than half the cost,
'Carbaryl' can wage the fight
To kill the deadly pest in host.

leaf eating
caterpillar
general
description

Nephantis has larvae called
Caterpillars black-headed;
Sometimes they are more
dreaded,
When gardens with them are
flooded.

At times like an epidemic,
In masses do they come
sporadic;
In salt and brackish water
tracts;
No one seems to know the facts.
Providing as a source of menace
Live in leaflet's lower surface;
Where too well they dwell
protected,
In galleries of silken thread.

nature of
damage

Nibbling on the layers green,
Larvae are in hundreds seen,
Instances are not rare,
When palms are often left bare.

control
chemical

Take a pound of fifty per cent
DDT and suspend it
In water gallons five and score,
For fifty palms or little more
Spray the palms from
underneath,
To rescue them from infestation,
Ere and after rainy season;
Malathion at quarter strength.

biological

Larval, pupal parasites,
Are Nature's boon given to us;
They in numbers in the field.
Prove no doubt, a good old shield.

chafer beetle
nature of
the pest and
damage

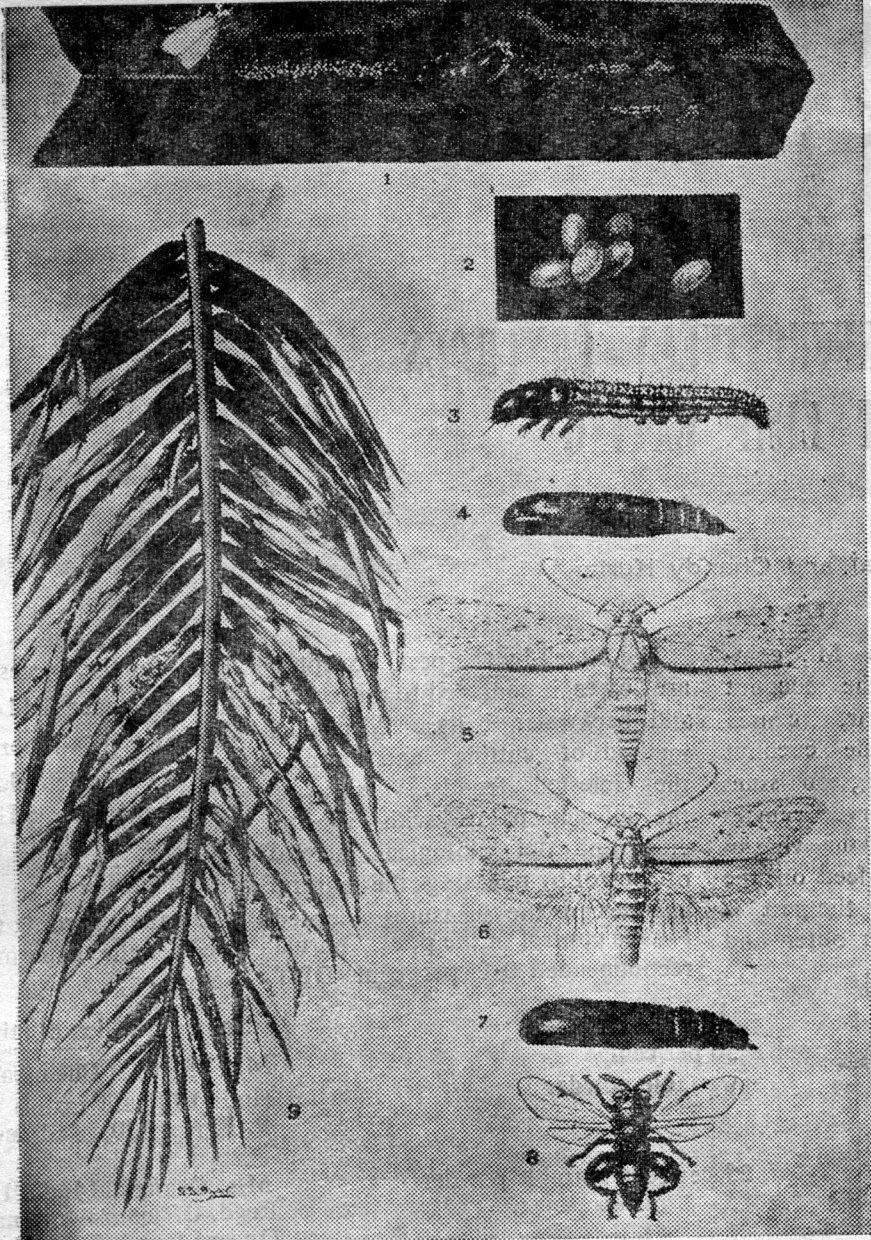
Chafer beetles mate in June,
Lay the eggs in soil soon;
Larvae in the sandy soil
Start the tender roots to spoil.

symptoms

Eaten roots have bitten tips,
Attacked palms have barren tops
Leaves are often turned yellow,
Due to larvae far below.

control

Aldrin twenty grams per acre,
Gammoxane at thrice the
strength;
Mixed in soil well with care,
Makes the larvae few at length,
To keep the pest in good
surrender,
Soil has to it under;
In months of May and September
When grubs above are more
in number.



Life cycle of the black headed caterpillar and its parasite

Broadcast dust on surface first,
Till or plough deep soil next;
This will kill the grubs in herds,
And expose them, besides, to

birds.
Many a minor pest of palm,
Cause at times a lot of harm;
Sometimes they in masses

break out,
And, untold havoc bring about,
Leaf rollers and slugs and mites,
Lace bugs, bagworms and

termites,
Scales, nematodes, rat and bat,
Set us on an endless combat.

Lace bugs have a dual role,

We are yet to fully unroll;
When they suck the juice of
plant,
Let the germs in tree implant,

Causing it to get diseased,
Leading on to go deceased.
Eel worms engage strong
suspicion,

As likely agent of transmission,

We have hence to take a caution,
Lest the palms should get
damage;

Practise all the control notion,
And save the palms from
sickly stage.

minor pests
general

nematodes

conclusion

lace bugs