SHORT SCIENTIFIC NOTES

Rosa indica and *Punica granatum* as New Hosts of Noctuid Moth *Achoea tirrhaea* Linnaeus in India

Semilooper moth, *Achoea tirrhaea* Linn. (Lepidoptera : Noctuidae) has been reported to suck the juice of citrus fruits (Ayyar, 1940 ; Pruthi and Mani, 1945). The present report records the feeding of *A. tirrhaea* larvae on two hosts, namely, *Rosa indica* (Family Rosaceae) and pomegranate, *Punica granatum* (Family Punicaceae).

During the last two years of regular survey of Horticulture Farm of Rajasthan College of Agriculture and orchards of Gulab Bagh (both at Udaipur, Rajasthan), a large number of semiloopers severely defoliating rose plants and pomegranate trees were observed. In pomegranate, these semiloopers were also found feeding on the outer bark of the twigs bearing fruits which lead to the drying of such infested twigs and subsequent premature fall of the fruits. The intensity of damage was severe during July–September but damage prolonged upto November. The pupal period was 17 to 25 days when cultured in laboratory.

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Occurrence of *Lymantria obfuscata* Walker, the Indian Gypsy Moth, as a Pest of Cacao in South India

A survey of the pests of cacao is in progress at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Regional Station, Vittal. During the survey, a brownish caterpillar was observed to cause severe damage to the tender leaves of cacao. A large number of these caterpillars were collected and reared in the laboratory. The pest has been identified as *Lymantria obfuscata* Walker, Lymantridae. A preliminary note on the pest is furnished here.

The entire body of the caterpillar is brownish and is covered by brownish tufts of hairs. Hatching of eggs usually occurs during night, and, in the laboratory, the newly hatched larvae congregate on the cacao leaves but do not commence feeding until the following night. The feeding rate increases with subsequent instars and the caterpillars feed voraciously on the entire tender leaves including the veins. In the field, the first instar caterpillars usually remain on the underside of the leaves and are carried by wind from tree to tree, suspended by long threads that they spin. The later instar caterpillars feed during the night only (Rahman, 1941), and, during the day, they hide on dried leaves and twigs around the cacao tree. In severe attacks, the caterpillars defoliate all the tender leaves, retarding the growth of the tree.

The Indian gypsy moth is a pest of forest and fruit trees in certain regions of North India and is closely related to *Lymantria* (*Porthetria*) *dispar* L., a destructive pest of deciduous, shade, and fruit trees in parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, and N. America (Beroza *et al.*, 1973).

This is the first record of *Lymantria obfuscata* Walker from South India.

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