Short Communications

Biological Note on *Dasychira mendosa* Hubn. (Lepidoptera: Lymantriidae)

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Castor, *Ricinus communis* L. is an important oilseeds crop in Gujarat. For the first time a hairy caterpillar, *Dasychira mendosa* Hubn. was observed infesting its leaves under field conditions. The appearance of this pest in Gujarat was first noticed during 1975 at the main Oilseeds Research Station, Junagadh. Mukerji (1929) reported this pest feeding on mango leaves at Calcutta. This pest was reported also feeding on mulberry and tea plants by Maki (1916) and Shiraki (1919) respectively in Formosa.

The biology of this pest was studied in the laboratory where the average minimum and maximum temperatures were 27·40 and 29·85°C, respectively. The eggs were collected from castor plants in the field and kept in petri dishes with leaves of castor. The newly hatched larvae were transferred to the tender leaves of castor placed in petri dishes. The adults emerged from the pupae were reared in the breeding jars with 5% sugar solution as food.

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The eggs were laid either on muslin cloth or surface of the breeding jars in long clusters covered with a yellowish secretion from the female moth. However, the eggs laid in the laboratory could not hatch. The larval period varied from 12 to 18 days. Pupation took place inside the brownish white cocoon on the castor leaves and the pupal period lasted for 7 to 10 days. Mukerji (1929) stated that the pupal period was completed in 8 days.

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