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Ovipositional Preference of *Earias vittella* (Fabricius) on Different Host Plants*

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Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench) shoot and fruit borer, *Earias vittella* (Fab.) survives on many of the alternate hosts in offseason. Moths that emerged in January and February laid the eggs on dry cotton stick, malvaceous weeds and hollyock (Hussain and Lal, 1923). Hence, a study was carried out to see the ovipositional preference of *E. vittella* on different cultivated and wild host plants.

A laboratory trial was conducted at the Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture, Junagadh during 1987 and was replicated four times with seven host plants *viz.*, cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.), okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench), *Khapat* (*Abutilon indicum* L.) *Jasud* (*Hibiscus rosasinensis* (L.)),

TABLE 1

Mean fecundity of *E. vittella* on host plants.

Sr. No.	*Host plant*	*Mean number of eggs laid/ female*
1.	Cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.)	237.0[a]
2.	Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench).	231.0[a]
3.	*Khapat* (*Abutilon indicum* L.)	209.5[a]
4.	*Jasud* (*Hibiscus rosasinensis* L.)	204.0[a]
5.	wild okra (Hibiscus abelmoschus L.)	142.0[b]
6.	*Hollyhock* (*Althoea rosea* L.)	37.5[c]
7.	Mulberry (*Morus alba* L.)	32.0[c]
	(P = 0.05)	50.2

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wild okra (*Hibiscus abelmoschus* L.) hollyhock (*Althoea rosea* L.) and mulberry (*Morus alba* L.). The eggs of *E. vittella* were collected from the mass culture developed in the laboratory for rearing. After hatching, fresh fruiting bodies of seven host plants were provided separately in wooden cages until pupation. After the emergence of adults, one pair was confined in individual glass jar and fed with 5 per cent honey solution soaked in cotton swab daily. Fresh leaves and branches with buds flowers and fruits of respective host plants were provided daily to different glass jars and were covered with muslin cloth. The number of eggs laid by the female on different host plants were counted daily till the death of the female.

Statistical analysis of the data indicated that the maximum number of eggs 237.0 were laid on cotton which was at par with okra (231.0, *Khapat* (209.5) and *Jasud* (204.0) followed by wild okra (142.0) eggs/female. The less preferred host plants for oviposition were hollyhock and mulberry as evident from the less number of eggs laid 37.5 and 32.0 per female, respectively. These results are in agreement with Mehta and Saxena (1970), who reported unriped fruits of okra and the leaves of cotton as the most preferred sight of host plants for oviposition of this pest.

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