GAU Res. J. 1994. 19 (2) : 128-129

Record of Three False Wireworms Infesting Groundnut in Gujarat

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The false wireworms from family Tenebrionidae viz., *Gonocephalum* sp. in Africa and *Agriotes gurgistanus* in Soviet Union have previously been reported damaging groundnut pods (Feakin, 1973; Fenili *et al.*. 1983; Tarimo and Karel 1987). Three false wireworms, *Penthicoides seriatoporus* Fair-maire, *Gonocephalum* sp. and *Opatroides frater* (Fairmaire) (Tenebrionidae : Coleoptera) were found damaging the groundnut pods (variety JL-24) at Main Dry Farming Research Station, Gujarat Agricultural University, Targhadia (Gujarat) during the monsoon season, 1991. Their incidence as pests of groundnut in India was not reported earlier. The incidence was observed more in mid-September 1991, damaging the pods in 25 per cent of groundnut plants. The larvae damaged the immature pods by piercing the shell and feeding on the seed. Their biology was studied in the laboratory during October - December, 1991.

Among these wireworms, *P. seriatoporus* was found important. The larvae were very active, smooth with a yellow brown to dark brown integument. The full grown larva measured 30 mm in length and 2.5 mm in breadth. The pupation took place in the soil. The pupa was pale yellowish. The pupal stage lasted for 2 to 6 days with an average of 3.80 days. The freshly emerged beetle was brown in colour, about 15 mm long and 6 mm wide. The beetles survived for 20 to 39 days with an average of 32 days.

The larvae of *Gonocephalum* were yellow in colour, measured 22 mm in length and 2 mm in breadth. The larval period was 58 days. They pupated in the soil. The pupal period was 9 days. The beetles were grey in colour found emitting offensive smell on disturbance. The adults were 12 mm long and 5 mm wide. Reddy and Puttaswamy (1985) reported this pest damaging Chilli in Karnataka. The beetles of *O. frater* were observed active in the soil near the groundnut plants. The larvae damaged immature pods. The beetles were black in colour, measured 7 mm in length and 2.5 mm in breadth. This wireworm was reported damaging tobacco seedlings in Andhra Pradesh (Joshi and Rao, 1968) and Chilli in Karnataka (Reddy and Puttaswamy 1985).

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During summer season, the adults of these wireworms were observed active in the decayed organic materials on the farm bunds. The population proportion of *Gonocephalum* adults was, however, found higher (97%) than other two wireworms (3%) in May, 1992.

The author is highly thankful to Dr. R. G. Booth, International Institute of Entomology, London for identifying the wireworm species.

(Received on 5th Janu., 1993)

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