

December only the conidial stage of the pathogen was observed. In the month of January brown to black coloured small dot-like perithecia, scattered on both the surfaces of the leaves were observed. The perithecia continued to develop up to March till the plant drops its leaves, however, newly formed leaves in the month of May, were healthy.

The mildew fungus was found to have hyaline mycelium. The perithecia were scattered, brown to dark brown in colour, superficial, almost globose with 108.10–169.50 (143.83 μ) in diameter, bearing myceloid appendages and containing 3–8 broadly ovate, slightly stalked to sessile asci measuring 39.95–61.10 \times 25.85–42.30 (50.14 \times 34.43 μ). Each ascus contained 3–5 (more frequently 4), oval to oblong, one-celled ascospores of 13.90–25.85 \times 9.40–16.45 (18.30 \times 12.35 μ) size. On the basis of morphology and measurements of perithecia, asci and ascospores the mildew fungus has been identified as *Erysiphe polygoni* DC.

In the literature so far available, there seems to be no previous report of the occurrence of *E. polygoni* on this weed. Therefore, the present note records *Tephrosia purpurea* Pers. as a new host for *E. polygoni*.

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Crab Caterpillar—*Stauropus alternus* Wik. (Notodnidae : Lepidoptera), A New Pest of Sapota (*Achras sapota* L.)

Stauropus alternus Wik. has been mentioned as occasional and minor pest of red gram (*Cajanus indicus* L.), tamarind (*Tamarix indica* L.), tea [*Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntze], *Mangifera indica* L., *Mangifera* sp. *Theobroma cacao* L., *Xylia dalberiformis* B (= *X. xylocarpta* T.) and *Terminalia paniculata* (Ayyar, 1960¹; Mathur and Singh, 1959 and 1960)^{2,3}. In October, 1973, larvae of *S. alternus* were found causing serious damage to the foliage of newly planted sapota grafts at Regional Research Station, Mudigere. The insect is placed on record for the first time as a pest of sapota and some observations made on the biology and damage of the pest are reported here.

The adult moth lays 98–100 whitish-blue eggs, singly on the undersurface of the leaf close to the margin. The newly hatched caterpillars are blackish to brown, elongate with long appendages and are found in pairs in the leaf axils. Larvae feed gregariously on the leaves during daytime from the margins to the midribs almost symmetrically from either sides. In case of severe damage, the whole leaf is eaten leaving behind only the midrib.

The damage is distinguished by the presence of excretory pellets and cut leaf bits in the drip-line. The full grown caterpillars measure 5.5 cm in length. Pupation takes place on the leaves webbed in a silken cocoon.

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1. Ayyar, T. V. R., *Hand Book of Economic Entomology for South India*, Government of Madras, 1960, pp. 289 and 307.
2. Mathur, R. N. and Singh, B., *Indian For. Bull.*, 1959, 171 (6), 75.
3. — and —, *Ibid.*, 1960, 171 (9), 49 and 98.

New Records of Alternative Host Plants of Red Cotton Bug, *Dysdercus cingulatus* Fab.

The red cotton bug (*Dysdercus cingulatus* Fab.) is considered to be one of the major pests of cotton (Sohi, 1964)¹. Its attack has been noticed on bhindi (*Hibiscus esculentus*), hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*), Deccan hemp (*Hibiscus cannabinus*), musk mallow (*Hibiscus abelmoschus*), shoe flower (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*), silk cotton (*Bombax malabaricum*), portia tree (*Thespesia populnea*), maize (*Zea mays*), bajra (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), kossum (*Schleichera oleosa*), cape gooseberry (*Physalis peruviana*), (*Solanum verbascifolium*), etc., by various workers in India.

During November 1972, the nymphs of red cotton bug were found feeding on wild castor (*Chrozophora rotleri*, Fam. Euphorbiaceae) and kanch-manda (*Trichodesma amplexicaule*, Fam. Boraginaceae), weed plants in the fields of Punjabrao Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola (Maharashtra).

In order to ensure that wild castor and kanch-manda would support the bugs, the nymphs and adults were collected and brought to the laboratory, and provided with weed twigs bearing fruiting structures. The cut portion of twigs was dipped in water in a glass vial to keep the food fresh. Both the nymphs and adults were kept in wire-gauze cages along with the food. The food was changed thrice a week.

It was observed that bugs actively continued feeding and majority of them survived throughout winter. Nymphs moulted normally. A few of the mated females deposited eggs. The eggs hatched and the newly hatched nymphs fed well on the twigs of wild castor and kanch-manda weeds to become adults.