SEASONAL ACTIVITY OF THE TEAK DEFOLIATOR *HYBLAEA PUERA* CRAMER (LEPIDOPTERA: HYBLACIDAE) AT ICRISAT, PATANCHERU, ANDHRA PRADESH

C. S. PAWAR and V. S. BHATNAGAR*
International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, Patancheru 502 324, India.
**Present address: Pest Management Consultant, C-30, Raghu-Rashmi, Bhagwandas Road, Jaipur 302 001, India.*

HYBLAEA PUERA Cramer (Lepidoptera: Hyblacidae), which is known to have 14 generations a year[1], is a serious pest to teak plantations in India[2]. Very little is known about its field population fluctuations. In a light trap study at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, Vaishampayan and Bahadur[3] recorded a large number of moths of *H. puera* in July–August and found that the moths were absent for six months from January to June. They suggested that the moths were either migratory or emerged from pupae which were possibly diapausing. Nair and Sudheendrakumar[4] reported seasonal activity of *Hyblaea* in teak plantations at Nilambur, Kerala, and showed that during most years defoliation occurred only for a short period from late April to September when one or two population peaks occurred. Insect survival during the rest of the period, October to March, was suspected, through low larval populations and short-range moth migration. Till date, these were the only evidences for continuity of active generations of *H. puera* throughout the year. Our study presented here is now the factual evidence.

In the light traps (Robinson's modified type) at this Centre, we recorded *H. puera* moths during 1978–79 (table 1). The moths were obtained throughout the year. This supports the observation made by Nair and Sudheendrakumar[4] on the continuity of the pest. The peak activity period (August–September) of the moths recorded by us corresponds well with that recorded at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, by Vaishampayan and Bahadur[3] but not with the one recorded at Nilambur, Kerala, where peak numbers were noticed in May–June. There is some evidence of south to north progression of the defoliation coinciding with the flushing of teak and arrival of the monsoon (K. S. S. Nair, personal communication). The origin of the moths caught in the light traps at ICRISAT Centre is not known. Although a few teak trees occur in a 30 km area, the nearest forest area with a substantial number of teak trees is about 30 km north-east at Narsapur, Medak district, and 80 km south-west at Vikarabad, Rangareddy district. It appears that the moths caught might have come from one of these areas. Vaishampayan and Bahadur[3] also reported that the nearest teak forests were at least 20–30 km away from the place where they trapped *H. puera* moths in large numbers.

Table 1 *Average monthly light-trap catches* of Hyblaea purea at ICRISAT Centre during 1978–79*

June	No record
July	21 ± 17
August	47 ± 16
September	22 ± 6
October	23 ± 5
November	6 ± 1
December	3 ± 1
January	4 ± 1
February	2 ± 2
March	3 ± 2
April	4 ± 2
May	3 ± 1

*Averages from 3 traps.

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