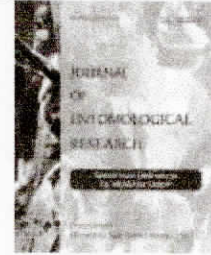


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Journal of Entomological Research
Year 2020, Volume 44, Issue 1 (January-March)
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Table of contents

Tracking the changes in protein profile during mating in male accessory glands of *Hesperiopsis ambersa* (H)
B.S. Chandra, Saraswathi, R. Manjha, Tannavi Khan, D. Manjula Kumar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00001.0

Mitochondrial genes and nuclear gene variation among seven species of the genus *Lisarda* of subfamily Salyavatinae (Heteroptera: Reduviidae)
S. Jaya Duriga, D.N.P. Sudarmani, A. Ganesh Kumar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00002.0

Drosophila hepari (Diptera: Drosophilidae), a new species from Jumoan, Nagaland (a state-territories/jointly state, India) its molecular phylogeny
Bovito Achum, Sarat Chandra Yemaiti
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00003.0

Comparative evaluation of some integrated pest management modules against *Leucospides orbonalis* Guen.
Anil Kumar, Vineeta Kaul, Uma Shankar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00004.0

Capsole formulations of *Metarhizium anisopliae* (Metchinkoff) Sorokin for the management of banana rhizome weevil, *Crematogaster acridus* (Germar)
S. Ramya, D.P. Nay Rani
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00005.0

Evaluation of insecticidal properties of sage, *Salvia officinalis* leaves against *Achoa fabae* Scopoli, 1766 (Homoptera: Achilidae)
K. Benoufela-Khoua, M. Anwar-Sadi, H. Fezai
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00006.0

Repellency property of certain botanical oils against two spotted spider mite, *Tetranychus urticae* (Koch) on castor, *Ricinus communis* L.
V. Sathyanesha M, Senthil Kumar, M. Puzhankam, V. Sankaran
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00007.0

The presence of ladybug beetle (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) as a predator on agriculture in Jammu region
Anil Johari, Dal Wulan Oktalari, Ratna Sari Dewi
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00008.0

Screening of different varieties of rice against shoot and fruit borer *Earias vitella*
B.B. Sakawad, B.B. Shrivast, B.V. Shinde
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00009.0

Ecofriendly approach for the management of red pumpkin beetle, *Rhynchoscyba brevicornis* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) on ridge gourd
Prveen, Suman Kapoor, Achint Verma
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00010.0

Seasonal incidence pattern and host preference of *Otidolopus longipolis* Olivier (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) on certain banana cultivars of Assam
Sudarsana Borah, Shuchi Kumar Singh, Priyadarshini Borah, Dipshaha Bora
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00011.0

Life tables and population parameters of sesame webworm *Antipsyche castanealis* (Duf.) (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) on sesame at different temperatures
Anwar J.A. Al-Osairy, Ahmed J.M. Al-Shammari
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00012.0

Effect of some weather factors on the population dynamics of leafhopper, *Acrostus biguttatus biguttatus* (Schindl) infesting in Bherdi
M. Parhamany, S. Suman, V. Sathyanesha, M. Senthil Kumar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00013.0

Effect of environmental factors on the population dynamics of major sucking pests ofokra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* L.)
Bhawani Singh Meena, S.V.S. Raju, S. Ramesh Babu, Kanak Nani Sharma
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00014.0

Virus induced global protein synthesis shutdown in *Acrobasis mytilis* infected with Bombay mullerian polyhedra virus
N. Triveni, Shyam Kumar Vootha
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00015.0

Studies on enzymes Superoxide dismutase and Catalase in midgut of *Salvia ricini* under thermal stress condition
Runeel Chandra Bora, S. Jayakumar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00016.0

Susceptibility status and Acetylcholinesterase (AChE) enzyme activity on *Aedes aegypti* L. (Diptera: Culicidae) Larvae against Imiprophos
Rishi Rahayu, Gusti Fatmah, Hasmawati
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00017.0

Antifeedant activity of ecofriendly phyto-insecticides against *Spodoptera litura*
M. Senthil Kumar, M. Puzhankam, V. Sathyanesha
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00018.0

Culicid susceptibility of 1923 larvae feeding ability of *Culiseta cophone* (Hamilton, 1822) in laboratory condition
Prati Ranjan Panah, Subhadeep Mall, Shubha Sankar Mandal, Rama Prasad Bhattacharya, Tanmay Bhattacharya
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00019.0

Mosquito larvicidal efficacy of methanolic extract from seeds of *Datura innoxia* Mill against *Aedes aegypti* (Linn.) with insight into GC-MS analysis
Manita Hemant Choyal, Lakshmi V. Shinde
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00020.0

Ground-dwelling ants species diversity (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) at conservation forest and oil palm plantation in Sumatra, Indonesia
Renny Herawati, Yuzuka Sakamata, Rigi Satrio, Muhammad N. Jansa
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00021.0

New distributional records of dragonflies (Libellulidae, Anisoptera: Zygoptera) from Rajon district of Jammu and Kashmir
Asif Hussain, Shafiq, Mohammad Asif Lone, Mohamad Amin Wani
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00022.0

Odonate diversity of Nongshyiem wildlife sanctuary, Rihoi district, Meghalaya, India
Abanu Bora, Lashram Remy Meitei, Suman Bhowmik
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00023.0

Some fruit sucking moths (Lepidoptera: Heterocera) from Jalna district of Maharashtra, India
Ravindra Pawarao Patil, Sharad Devidasrao Jadhav
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00024.0

A study on prevalence of the practice of entomology in Upper Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, North East India
Sudarsana Bora, Anshu Boruah, Pooja Sanowal, Dipshaha Bora
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00025.0

Screening of local varieties and validation of newer molecules on the incidence of sucking insect pests in rice-crop ecosystem of Manipur valley
Abhata Das, K.I. Singh, J. Yengyang Longkumer
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00026.0

Toxicity and repellency of *Eucalyptus globulus* L. essential oil against *Achoa fabae* Scopoli, 1766 (Homoptera: Achilidae)
Harisra Abdulkader, Benguerat Abdulkader, Boukhan Yaha
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00027.0

First report of *Heterostichus schacki* (Brachyida: Scorpiones: Buthidae) as a new record from Jishan Province, Central Iran
H. Kassin, R. Dehghani, M. Kaviani, M. Dehghani, M. Kashi
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00028.0

First report of human infestation dermatitis due to chigger mite (Acari: Trombididae) in Iran
H. Kassin, B. Fathi, R. Dehghani, S. Dehghani, K. Doostdar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00029.0

First record of damage by pest mite in medicinally important *Sonchus oleraceus* L. plants in western ghats of India
Chavan Vinod Kumar Dharmajay
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00030.0

Administration of blue green algae, *Spirulina meneghiniana* on the *Alopius alba* leaves to enhanced growth rate and economic traits of silkworm
V.K. Stanley Raja, S. Abraham Muthukumar
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00031.0

Morpho-physiological basis of plant defense mechanisms against insect pests
Shimantini Borakati, S.P. Nanda, M. Devender Reddy, Ritu Ranjan Taya
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00032.0

Incorporation of humic acid into chitosan edibles coating in preservation of Rambutan fruit, *Avicennium littorale*
Nguyen Phung Minh
DOI:10.5898/0974-4576.2020.00033.0



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First record of damage by pest snail in medicinally important *Barleria cristata* L. plants in western ghat of India

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ABSTRACT

In India, western ghat region of Maharashtra is one of the known natural habitat of various medicinal plants. *B. cristata* L. (Family *Acanthaceae*) is one such medicinal plant abundantly found in this region. Several studies on *B. cristata* L. revealed that the whole plant or its specific parts are being utilized for the treatment of many diseases without any side effects. This is extensively used for Ayurvedic / herbal preparations in India. Now these days during the monsoon season it has been observed that *B. cristata* L. is attacked by pest snail. Snail causes 70-80% damage to leaf biomass of *B. cristata* L. the present finding. This constitutes first report on occurrence of snail as pest of *B. cristata* L.

Key words : *Barleria cristata*, medicinal plant, pest, snail, western ghat

INTRODUCTION

Barleria cristata L. (Family *Acanthaceae*) is a well-known perennial, ayurvedic herb and distributed in tropical Asia and Africa. In India, this plant is available in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Western ghats, Gurgram, Haryana, Chhatisgarh, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Southern India, Kumaoun, Uttarakhand and Thar desert of Rajasthan (Kiritkar, 2000). Several studies on *B. cristata* L. revealed that the whole plant or its specific parts like leaf, stem, root, bark, and flower are utilized for the treatment of toothache, urinary infection, jaundice, fever, gastrointestinal disorders, whooping cough, inflammations, glandular swellings. It is also known to possess diuretic property diuretic and tonic without any toxic effects. Owing its incredible medicinal potential it used for ayurvedic/ herbal preparations in India. In recent time, *B. cristata* L. was found to be devastated by the attack of injurious pest snail. Severe leaf biomass has been reported of *B. cristata* L. due to pest snail. Hence, both quantity and quality of medicinal compounds present in *B. cristata* get reduce due to damage caused by snail during plant development. Accordingly, this study is the first to document the presence of snail as pest on *B. cristata* in western ghat.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area and Plant material : Occurance of snail on *B. cristata* L. was seasonal. Therefore monsoon season was fixed for the present study. Three districts of Maharashtra namely Ratnagiri, Raigad and Sindhudurg were selected as study site during year of 2017-2018. Natural habitats as well as garden potted plants of *B. cristata* L. (Family *Acanthaceae*) were used for study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first incidence of damage by snail in *B. cristata* L. was noticed in Mandangad tahsil of Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra. Later it was recorded in all three districts namely Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Raigad. During this study, it was noticed that pest snail affecting the *B. cristata* L. during Monsoon season only. Seasonal occurrence of some other insects were reported on *B. cristata* L. and *B. prionitis* as reported by David and Rangarajan (1966). In another report, it was reported that pests and diseases causes 26% to 38% yield losses (Cerdea *et al.*, 2017). The snail was found to cause 70 to 80% leaf biomass loss of *B. cristata* L. (Fig. 1). During this study, it was observed that pest snail affected only the leaves. Due to the attack of snail *B. cristata* L., exhibited symptoms like less flowering and seed

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