SCIENTIFIC NOTE

Occurrence of *Fulcidax coelestina* (Lac.)(Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Fulcidacinae) in Barbados Cherry *Malpighia glabra* L.

RAIMUNDO BRAGA SOBRINHO, ANTÔNIO L.M. MESQUITA AND CLÓDION T. BANDEIRA

EMBRAPA Agroindústria Tropical, Caixa postal 3761, 60.510-111, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
E-mail: braga@cnpat.embrapa.br

An. Soc. Entomol. Brasil 28(3): 541-542 (1999)

Ocorrência de *Fulcidax coelestina* (Lac.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Fulcidacinae) em Acerola, *Malpighia glabra* L.

RESUMO - Desde janeiro de 1996, o crisomelídeo *Fulcidax coelestina* (Lac.), pertencente à subfamília Fulcidacinae, tem sido encontrado atacando severamente ramos laterais e principal de plantas da acerola *Malpighia glabra* L. nos municípios de Pacajus e Paraipaba no Estado do Ceará. As larvas fazem o anelamento do ramo principal e dos laterais da planta, provocando o bloqueio floêmico com conseqüente seca dos ramos ou planta. A mortalidade pode chegar a 100% em plantas jovens. Este é o primeiro registro da ocorrência da praga atacando a aceroleira no Brasil. A presença contínua do inseto nos plantios de acerola tem forçado o uso sistemático do controle químico para reduzir as populações. O adulto apresenta corpo azul metálico com superfície extremamente rugosa. O último estádio larval constrói um envoltório em forma de coração utilizando seu próprio excremento onde completa o ciclo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Insecta, praga, floema, larva, mortalidade, cereja das Antilhas.

The Barbados cherry *Mapighia glabra* L. (Mapighiaceae) is typically a tropical fruit plant species which has been increasing its plantation in Brazil during the last twenty years especially in the Northern part of the country. Probably originated from Antilles it was introduced into Brazil in the fifties and it was commercially established in the eighties (Knight, 1980).

The entomological literature mentions several arthropods as Barbados cherry pests belonging to families of the order Homoptera, such as Aphididae, Ortheziidae, Margarodidae, Coccidae and Aethalionidae; order Hemiptera family Coreidae; order Diptera family Tephritidae; order Hymenoptera families Formicidae and Apidae; and Coleoptera family Curculionidae (Boareto & Brandão 1995; Araújo & Minami 1994; Bastos 1981; Gallo *et al.* 1988; and Ledin 1958). However no insect belonging to the family Chrysomelidae is mentioned.

From 1996 Barbados cherry fields located at Pacajus and Paraipaba in the State of Ceará have been severily attacked by a different arthropod species which was identified as

(Coleoptera; Chrysomelidae; Fulcidacinae) *Fulcidax coelestina* (Lac.). The larval stage of this insect girdles the terminal and lateral branches of the Barbados cherry plant interrupting the phloemic translocation and causing death of theses branches. In young plants it has caused total drought and consequently death. Its presence in nursery may cause 100% of plant mortality forcing the use of preventive chemical control. This is the first register of the occurrence of this insect attacking the Barbados cherry in Brazil. Since this pest has been continuosly causing damage to Barbados cherry in both locations, a systematic chemical control was used, as a measure to reduce the population.

The body of the adults of the species is dark metallic blue with rough surface. Pronotum and elytra are strongly turbeculated or with irregular crests. The head capsule is parcially hidden and almost invisible from the above view. The head is located into the anterior pronotum opening. The antennae present seven to eight club segments. The adults in general present the play possum behavior when disturbed. At the last stadium, the larva constructs a cocoon made up of its excrements to complete the cycle. The cocoon has a heart shape and it is carried by the larva until pupation (Silva *et al.* 1968; Costa Lima 1955).

The subfamily Fulcidacinae presents other species of minor importance of the genus *Fulcidax* on other host plants. The species *F. bacca* Kirby and *F. cuprea* Klug are pests of no cultivated plants of the species *Banisteria argyrophyllus*, *B. stellaris* and *Mascagnia cordifolia*, and plants of the family Malphiguiaceae with a vast distribution in the State of São Paulo – Brazil (Silva *et al.* 1968; Costa Lima 1955).

Acknowledgments

We thank Dr. L. M. de Almeida and Dr. C. S. Ribeiro Costa from Universidade Federal do Paraná, Departamento de Zoologia - Centro de Identificação de Insetos Fitófagos, for the identification of the insects.

Literature Cited

Araújo, P.S.R. de & K. Minami. 1994. Acerola. Campinas - S.P, Fundação Cargil, 81p.

Bastos, J.A.M. 1981. Principais pragas das culturas e seu controle. S. Paulo, Nobel, 329p.

Boareto , M.A.C & A.L.S. Brandão. 1995. Pragas da cultura da acerola, p. 58-61 In: A.R., São José. & R.E. Alves (ed), Acerola do Brasil: Produção e mercado. Vitória da Conquista, Univ. Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, 160p.

Costa Lima, A.D.A. 1955. Insetos do Brasil. Coleópteros - pt. III, t. 9 Rio de Janeiro, Escola Nacional de Agronomia. 289p (Serie did. 11)

Gallo, F., O. Nakano, S. Silveira Neto, R.P.L. Carvalho, G.C. Batista, E. Berti Filho, J.R.D. Parra, R.A. Zucchi, S.B. Alves & J.D. Vendramin. 1988. Manual de entomologia agrícola. S.Paulo, Agronômica Ceres, 649p.

Knight, J. 1980. Origin and world importance of tropical and subtropical fruits, p. 1-20. In: S. Nagy & P.E.Shaw. Tropical and subtropical fruits. - composition, properties and uses. AVI Publishing Co., Westport, CT.

Ledin, R.B. 1958. The Barbados or West Indian cherry. Flo. Agric. Exp. Station Bull. 594: p.15-17.

Silva, A.G.A., C.R. Gonçalves, D.M. Galvão, A.J.L. Gonçalves, J. Gomes, M.N. Silva & L. da Simone. 1968. Quarto catálogo dos insetos que vivem nas plantas do Brasil, seus parasitos e predadores. Rio de Janeiro, MA -Serviço de Defesa Sanitária Vegetal. 622p. (pt. II).

Received 28/VIII/98. Accepted 06/VI/99.