Occurrence of *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) (Homoptera, Pseudococcidae) on the inflorescence of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss in Assam, India

Selim Mehmud¹, Sasanka Sekhar Ghosh², Twinkle Chetia³, Dip Jyoti Haloi⁴*, Himu Roy³, Pranab Bujarbarua⁵

¹Department of Botany, University of Science and Technology Meghalaya, Techno City, Kling Road, Baridua, Ri-Bhoi 793101, Meghalaya, India.
²Department of Zoology, Cotton University, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001, Assam, India.
³Department of Botany, Cotton University, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001, Assam, India.
⁴Department of Zoology, Handique Girls’ College, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001, Assam, India.
⁵Department of Botany, Handique Girls’ College, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001, Assam, India.
Email: diphaloi1979@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) was reported for the first-time on the inflorescence of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss during its sporadic flowering in Kamrup Rural district of the state of Assam. Egg cases, nymphs and adults of *A. pretiosa* were found in the inflorescence. They were attended by the black ants *Technomyrmex albipes*. © 2024 Association for Advancement of Entomology

KEYWORDS: Bamboo, mealy bugs, life stages, ants

Bamboos are characterized by two types of flowering, viz. sporadic and gregarious (Biswa et al., 2016; Das et al., 2018). In the former, flowering takes place at a time only in a few culms or a few culms of a population while in the latter, flowering occurs within a brief interval of time amongst all the individuals of a species growing across large areas leading to the mortality of culms after flowering (Janzen, 1976; Xie et al., 2016). In India, flowering of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss (= *B. arundinacea*) has been reported from different states viz., Assam (Sarma et al., 2010; Sharma and Borthakur, 2018), Uttar Pradesh (Malik, 2016) and Uttarakhand (Chandra et al., 2022).

Sporadic flowering in two clusters of bamboos has been observed in the Mandakata area of the Kamrup Rural district of Assam (located at 26°13.083’N; 91°44.024’E) during March to May 2023. Egg cases of *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) (Homoptera, Pseudococcidae) along with roaming black ants *Technomyrmex albipes* were observed in the inflorescence (Fig. 1 A, B-D, F). These egg cases were 2-3mm long and around 2mm wide, brown-black and covered by white cottony substances (Fig. 1 F-H), distinct long anal wax tube (Fig. 1 F), and around 0.2mm long eggs inside the cases (Fig. 1 I). Adult female insect was around 4mm long (Fig. 1 D-E) and nymphs were 0.4mm long and 0.2mm wide (Fig. 1 J).

Association of insects with bamboos has already been reported from India (Mathew and Varma, 1988; Kazmi and Husen, 1999; Koshy et al., 2001;
Fig. 1: A. Flowering of *Bambusa bambos*. B-C *Antonina pretiosa* egg cases (arrow) and black ants, D-E. Adult *A. pretiosa* (arrow) in bamboo inflorescence, F. Association of black ants with egg cases of *A. pretiosa* (arrow showing long anal wax tube)
Antonina graminis (Maskell) (=A. indica), A. pretiosa and A. zonata (Green) are common sap suckers on the foliage and culms of different bamboo species in the country (Varma and Sajeev, 2015). Although A. pretiosa commonly occurs in the nodes of the stem and under the leaf sheath of bamboo (Ülgentürk et al., 2014), its occurrence in the inflorescence of bamboos has not been so far reported.

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