

## SCIENTIFIC NOTE

**Taxonomic Identification of Lepidopterous Species  
of Cashew Plant in Brazil**ANTONIO L. M. MESQUITA<sup>1</sup>, VITOR O. BECKER<sup>2</sup> AND RAIMUNDO B. SOBRINHO<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>EMBRAPA/Centro Nacional de Pesquisa de Agroindústria Tropical, Rua Dra. Sara Mesquita, 2270, Pici, 60511-110, Fortaleza, CE.<sup>2</sup>EMBRAPA/Centro de Pesquisa Agropecuária dos Cerrados, BR 020 Km 18, Rodovia Brasília/Fortaleza, 73301-970, Planaltina, DF.

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Identificação Taxonômica de Espécies de Lepidópteros em Cajueiro no Brasil

RESUMO - Este trabalho relata a identificação taxonômica das espécies de lepidópteros *Thagona postropaea* Dyar (Limantriidae), *Stenoma cathosiota* Meyrick (Stenommatidae) e *Anacamptis* cf. *phytomiella* Busck (Gelechiidae) que atacam o cajueiro (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) no Brasil. Tipos de dano, locais de ocorrência e níveis de ataque são citados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Insecta, *Anacardium occidentale*, *Thagona postropaea*, *Stenoma cathosiota*, *Anacamptis* cf. *phytomiella*.

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Cashew plant (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) has been one of the major crop in North-east Brazil with high social and economic importance. The cashew growing area in Brazil is concentrated mainly in the States of Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte and Piauí (Pessoa *et al.* 1995).

In the late 70's this crop started its expansion in Northeastern region favoured by Government financial support. At that time, cashew plantations were established, forming a monocropping system bringing about an unbalanced environment and consequently, favouring the incidence and increase of new pests.

The current literature has mentioned 106 arthropod pests associated to cashew crops [99 insects and seven mites (Bleicher & Melo 1996)]. Some of them are seasonal pests and occur at local level with no economic importance. Others, are more frequent pests and

usually offer a risk to cashew crop. Most of these pests are not well known, specially their biology, behavior, biological and chemical controls and alternative hosts. For some of them the taxonomic identification at species level is still unknown. In this paper three lepidopterous cashew pests species are identified.

*Thagona postropaea* Dyar (Lymantriidae), called "cashew white moth" was mentioned as a cashew pest in 1959 by Silva (1961) in Fortaleza, Ceará State, Brazil. It was primarily identified by A.M. Costa Lima as *T. parthenica* (Dyar). Further, A.M. Costa Lima based on information from The National Museum of National History at Washington, DC, concluded that it belonged to a new species. In 1991, a sample was shipped to the second author and identified as *T. postropaea* Dyar. Cavalcante *et al.* (1977) already mentioned an attack of *Thagona* sp. to a blooming cashew plantation over 1,000 hectares in

Aracoiaba county, Ceará State, Brazil. This insect is also known as “véu de noiva” and is today an important cashew defoliator in the Northeastern region. The adult is a white moth, 11 mm long and wing span of 25 mm. The larvae are greenish stressed with a yellow strip on the abdomen dorsum and thorax; the body is covered with long whitish hairs; the last instar is 30 mm long.

*Anacampsis* cf. *phytomiella* Busck (Gelechiidae). The nut borer “traça-da-castanha” was detected for the first time in 1982, in São Benedito county, Ceará State. The larva penetrates into the nut through the insertion point of the apple during its early developmental stage. After damaging the kernel, the last instar builds a hole, usually at the upper portion of the nut, for adult escape (Araujo *et al.* 1987). The attack symptom is usually associated to a constriction at the apple near to the insertion point of the nut. The hole nut index for this pest at Pacajus Experimental Station in Ceará State, during the agricultural years of 1989 and 1990 were 3.97 % and 4.80 %, respectively. This result was obtained from data of 1.7 million nut samples. This pest was also detected in other counties of the Rio Grande do Norte and Piauí States. The adult is about 8 mm long with 16 mm of wing span. General dark gray color; anterior wing with light gray areas. The larvae are brown; the last instar is ca. 12 mm long.

*Stenoma cathosiota* Meyrick (Stenomatidae). It was first detected in 1990 in the county of Canto do Buriti, State of Piauí. The larvae rasp off the bark of the main stem and branches, with major incidence at the bifurcation points. Larvae protect themselves by weaving a mixture of faeces and threads.

When first detected this pest presented an infestation level of approximately 80%.

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