SHORT NOTE

Record of *Erythmelus helopeltidis* Gahan (Hymenoptera: Mymaridae), an egg parasitoid from *Pachypeltis maesarum* (Heteroptera: Miridae) infesting cashew

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The Tea Mosquito Bugs (TMB), *Helopeltis antonii* Signoret, *H. bradyi* Waterhouse and *H. theivora* Waterhouse (Heteroptera: Miridae) are the most serious pests of cashew. *Pachypeltis maesarum* Kirkaldy (Heteroptera: Miridae), which was a minor pest mainly infesting betel vines, has of late become one of the serious pests of cashew in India. Wild brinjal (*Solanum* sp.) and Cat Tail (*Acalypha hispida*) were recorded as alternate hosts of this pest. *P. maesarum* and *H.theivora* have been recorded in company with *H.antonii* in Kerala (Abraham, 1981). The adults and nymphs of *P. maesarum* are serious pests of cashew damaging tender shoots, inflorescence, immature fruits and apples at various stages of development. The tender leaves infested by this pest develop characteristic eruptive spots and finally shrivel and fall off (Figure 1).

During the routine survey for egg parasitoids of TMB from the cashew plantations at the Directorate of Cashew Research, Puttur, the cashew plant parts (leaves and shoots) containing eggs of *P. maesarum* were collected. The eggs of *P. maesarum* were differentiated by examining the typical feeding punctures on young leaves and the respiratory filaments of eggs (Figure 1). The eggs were counted under zoom stereomicroscope and treated in carbendazim (0.1%) solution for 15 minutes. After treatment, samples were dried to remove the dampness of carbendazim solution and placed in a plastic container (250 ml capacity) fitted with a glass tube (75mm x 7.5 mm) to record the emergence of parasitoids. The container (except the glass tube) was completely wrapped with a black paper.

The emergence of *Erythmelus helopeltidis* Gahan (Hymenoptera: Mymarida) was recorded from the eggs (Figure 2). Out of 52 eggs observed, the percent parasitism was 3.8 per cent. This is the first report of egg parasitoid *Erythmelus helopeltidis* from *P.maesarum* eggs. Earlier *Erythmelus helopeltidis* has been reported from *H.antonii* eggs by Devasahayam (1986) and Sundararaju (1993). *Erythmelus helopeltidis* was reported on *H.theobromae* Miller in cocoa from Malaysia (Ibrahim, 1989). Since *P.maesarum* is emerging as a major pest of cashew (when flushing starts in cashew) in the study area, the present report of *Erythmelus helopeltidis* can help in the future biological control of this pest.

![Fig 1. a) Pachypeltis maesarum damage symptom, b) P. maesarum adult, c) egg](image1.png)

![Fig 2. Erythmelus helopeltidis emerged from P. maesarum egg](image2.png)
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