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New record of *Dinothrombium* sp. (Trombidiidae : Acarina) parasitic on the lac predator, *Eublemma amabilis* Moore (Noctuidae : Lepidoptera)

From a plot of pigeon pea, *Cajanus cajan* (Linn.) Millsp. bearing *Aghani* lac crop, in the Institute Plantation, the authors came across a number of caterpillars of *Eublemma amabilis* Moore attacked by the mite, *Dinothrombium* sp., during the month of August. The mite was in its larval stage and the host caterpillars in the advanced stages of their development. The latter had also prepared domes for their pupation. The incidence of attack was to the extent of 72.0 per cent and one to seven mites per caterpillar, attached indiscriminately, were observed.

Adults of trombidiid genera *Dinothrombium* and *Angelothrombium* are referred to as giant red velvet mites and prey on termites, whereas larvae commonly feed on many species of grasshoppers. Following a heavy rainstorm, an unusual eruption from soil, of one or more species of *Dinothrombium* was discovered as a bright red bloom on a 5 acre plot in Arizona¹. Another eruption of *Dinothrombium* sp. was reported from India under virtually identical circumstances.²

From India, only two species of parasitic Trombidiidae namely, *Eutrombidium trigonum* Hermann on older nymphs and adults of *Hieroglyphus nigrorepletus* Bolivar (*Phadka*)³ and *Trombidium grandissimum*

Koch. on Bombay locust (*Patanga succincta* L)⁴ appear to have so far been recorded.

The present record appears to be the first of a species of the genus *Dinothrombium* parasitizing a lepidopteran caterpillar i.e. *E. amabilis*. Since the latter is a key pest of lac, responsible for destroying one-third of the lac crop annually, the precise assessment of the role of this parasitic mite attains considerable importance in the control of this pest.

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¹ I. M. Newell and T. Lloyd Jr., *Ann. ent. Soc. Am.*, 53, 293-304, 1960.

² G. W. Krantz, *A Manual of Acarology*, 1970, p. 167, (O.S.U. Bookstores, U.S.A.).

³ K. M. Peshwani, *Indian J. Ent.*, 22(3), 236, 1960.

⁴ H. M. Lefroy, *Mem. Dep. Agric. India ent. ser.* 4, 1-109, 1906.