

**Review articles & Short notes**

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**Report of *Spodoptera litura* Fabricius on lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.) and water lily (*Nymphaea nouchali* Burm. f.) in Kerala****Karthika S, Malini Nilamudeen and Sheena A***Department of Agricultural Entomology, RARS (South Zone)**College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Kerala Agricultural University 695522, Kerala, India***Corresponding author: malini.n@kau.in**

Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) and water lily (*Nymphaea nouchali*) are perennial aquatic basal eudicots belonging to the family Nelumbonaceae and Nymphaeaceae, respectively. They prefer shallow, murky water in a warm climate. The stems, leaf stalks and roots are submerged while the leaves and fragrant flowers remain above the surface of water. Lotus is the sacred flower of India. It occupies a special position in the art and mythology of ancient India. Both are important horticultural plants, with their uses ranging from ornamental, nutritional to medicinal values, especially in Southeast Asia.

Lotus and water lilies of Instructional farm, College of Agriculture, Vellayani (8.5°N latitude, 76.9°E longitude and 29 m above MSL) were found damaged severely by a caterpillar. Their foliage was scraped and eaten away (Fig.1). Caterpillar bored into flower buds and fed from within. The buds were seen with bored holes (Fig.2). Upon careful inspection, the pest was identified as

tobacco cutworm, *Spodoptera litura* Fabricius (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae). It is one of the most important insect pests of agricultural crops and is also found to feed on ornamentals such as rose, jasmine, dahlia, etc., (Ahmad *et al.*, 2013). The eggs were found laid on the upper surface of leaves in clusters, covered with the tuft of abdominal hairs of the moth. Early instar larvae were light green in colour and were found damaging the leaves by scrapping the leaf surfaces. Older instars were dark brown or black in colour with a bright yellow stripe along the dorsal surface. They fed voraciously defoliating the entire leaf (Fig. 3). The flowers were also found damaged by the caterpillars (Fig. 4). Several larval stages were found feeding inside the emerging buds and on foliage of the lotus and water lilies grown in the farm. The adult moth (Fig.5) is nocturnal in habit. The body is grey-brown in colour. *Spodoptera litura* feeding on lotus and water lily is now being reported from nurseries across Kerala.



Figure 1: Larva scraping the leaves



Figure 2: Boring symptom in bud

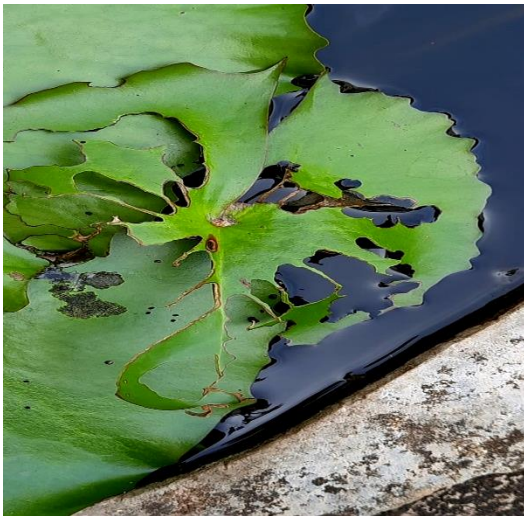


Figure 3: Extensive damage in leaves



Figure 4: Larva damaging water lily



Figure 5: Adult

**References**

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