IDENTIFICATION OF GALL FORMING INSECT ON *Erythrina indica* IN VAVUNIYA AND BATTICALOA DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

The *Erythrina* gall forming insect was first recorded in damaging coral trees, *Erythrina* species (Fabaceae.) in southern Taiwan in 2003, since then it has rapidly spread throughout the islands on various species of *Erythrina*. Galls form on the leaves, petioles, young shoots, stems and obvious swelling can be seen on infected tissue part. Severe infestations cause curling of young shoots, defoliation and death of the tree. This study involved the identification of gall forming insect on *Erythrina indica* and their infestation level at Vavuniya district.

A questionnaire survey was carried out in the Vavuniya district to find out the damage level of this insect. The infested leaves of *Erythrina indica* by gall forming insect were collected from the Animal Production Farm at the Eastern University,Sri Lanka, premises and the selected farmers fields in the Vavuniya district at weekly interval for the period of two months. The infested leaves were reared on special vials until the emergence of adult insects. The emerged adults were preserved for further studies.

The number of adult insects was carefully examined to identify the species based on their morphological characteristics. Adult insects were mounted because of their small size. A number of different keys, reference collections, taxonomic catalogues and many descriptions were used in the identification.

The gall forming insect on *Erythrina* was identified as *Quadrastics erythrinae* by Kim *et al* (2004). The questionnaire survey showed that the more than 85% of the *Erythrina indica* was damaged by *Quadrastics erythrinae* and this is the highest threat for the production of *Erythrina indica* in future.

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