



CARDAMOM THRIPS ON FLOWERING GINGER

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Common Name: Cardamom thrips

Scientific Name: *Sciothrips cardamomi* (Ramakr)

Order: Thysanoptera

Family: Thripidae

Damage

Injury is caused by thrips feeding in young leaf sheaths and basal ends of opened and unopened flower bracts (Fig. 1). First the injured area develops a silvery sheen because of air occupying the emptied cell cavities. Due to oxidation, this area becomes a mixture of white, yellow, and brown blotches and streaks (Figs. 2 and 3). Overall, the symptoms are similar to those of mealybug injury.

Other Hosts

This pest affects cardamom and probably some others in the family Zingiberaceae.

Distribution

The cardamom thrips is found in Hawaii and India. First found in Hawaii on pink flowering ginger

in 1986, it is now found on the islands of Hawaii and Maui but is probably present on all the major islands due to interisland movement of flowering ginger.



Fig. 2. Red ginger inflorescence with terminal removed, showing feeding damage by the cardamom thrips.



Fig. 1. Cardamom thrips, clockwise from top: newly emerged adult, adult female, nymph.



Fig. 3. Close-up of red ginger flower bract showing feeding damage by the cardamom thrips.

Description and Life Cycle

Eggs are inserted in leaf sheaths or flower bracts by the sharp ovipositor of the adult. Nymphs and adults feed with their rasping-sucking mouth parts, which lacerate young tissues and suck the juices that ooze from ruptured cells. The life cycle is 25 to 30 days. Reproduction is mostly sexual, though virgin females are able to lay viable eggs during summer.

References

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- Ramakrishna Ayyar, T. V. 1935. A new disease of cardamom (*Elatteria cardamomi*) apparently due to insect damage in South India. *Bull. Entomol. Res.* 26:359–362.