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JADERA SCENTLESS PLANT BUGS IN FLORIDA (HEMIPTERA: RHOPALIDAE)[1]

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INTRODUCTION: Two species of Jadera are known from Florida, J. antica Walker and J. haematoloma (Herrich-Schaeffer), but only the latter species is common. J. haematoloma feeds on a variety of plants but prefers balloonvine, Cardiospermum spp. (Sapindaceae) which grows in southern Florida, other Sapindaceae, Ficus spp. (Moraceae) and Althaea spp. (Malvaceae). When J. haematoloma appears in large colonies in yards and gardens, people become curious and/or alarmed and contact agricultural officials for information. Mothers have become upset over their children's clothes being stained red from the squashed bodies of J. haematoloma, due to their children playing on infested lawns. The bugs aggregate to feed on seeds that have dropped to the ground from trees overhead, especially from goldenrain trees, Koelreuteria spp., (Sapindaceae). Wheeler (1982) documented J. haematoloma as a nuisance insect in Texas, and having invaded homes from nearby Chinaberry trees in Oklahoma.

SYNONYMY: Jadera haematoloma was described in Leptocoris and has been recorded in Serinetha, Lygaeus, and Pyrrhotes. Jadera antica (Walker) is the name currently accepted for Jadera sanguinolenta (Fabricius) of various authors having reported it in southern Florida and southward. True sanguinolenta is a Neotropical species that occurs in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands but not in the Continental U.S.A.

DESCRIPTIONS: Adults: J. haematoloma (normal wings) (fig. 1) length 9.5-13.5 mm; width 3-4 mm. The shortwinged form (brachypter) (fig. 2) usually is 7-8 mm long. Color mostly black or brownish-black except for reddish eyes and their orbits, ocelli, shoulders, and border area of abdomen. J. antica (fig. 4) length 7.5-11 mm; width 2.5-4.0 mm. Color basically brownish-salmon, some specimens more brownish, others more reddish; fuscous dots abundant over upper surface and on sides of thorax; eyes, sides of head, shoulders, and abdomen reddish, the abdomen sprinkled with darker red spots. For more detailed technical descriptions or keys, consult Blatchley (1926), Gollner-Scheiding (1979), or Hoebeke and Wheeler (1982). For a broader understanding of Jadera and its relatives, consult Chopra (1967) and Schaefer and Chopra (1982). Nymphs: (fig. 3) Color predominately reddish, but thorax, antennae, beak, and legs brown. Small dark setae are nearly uniformly spaced over whole body as revealed by hand lens or microscope; having family character of 2 abdominal scent glands lying so close together in middle of dorsal abdomen, that segment 5 is constricted at midline.

HOSTS: Schaefer and Chopra (1982) reported that Jadera and the closely related genus Leptocoris of the subfamily Serinethinae have a clear preference for plants of the Sapindales, especially of the Sapindaceae.

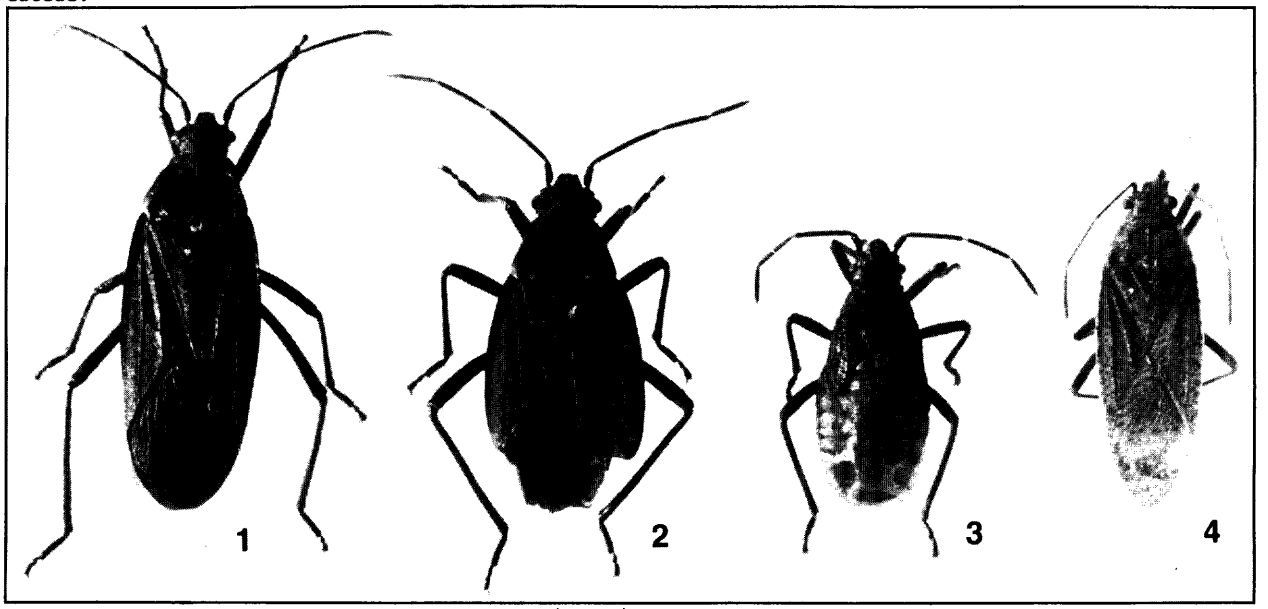

Fig. 1-3. Jadera haematoloma (H.-S.). Fig. 4. J. antica Walker.
(DPI photo #850077; photo credit, J. Lotz)

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DISTRIBUTION: J. haematoloma (fig. 5) has been reported from some of the southeastern states west to Texas and California, several central states, and from Mexico, the West Indies, southward to Central America and Colombia; also Hawaii. In Florida it ranges over the peninsula but seems to be scarce in the north, and strangely absent from "panhandle" Florida as discerned from records in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA). J. haematoloma has been taken during every month in Florida, with May being the peak month, primarily in central Florida, the region containing the majority of records. In southern Florida, there is a more even distribution throughout the year, with no distinct spring peak according to FSCA records. J. antica (fig. 6) records are scarce; it has been collected only a few times in Monroe and Dade Counties, and once in Osceola (15-III-56 by H. A. Denmark). Records (FSCA) for J. antica in Florida are in March, April, June, August, and November.

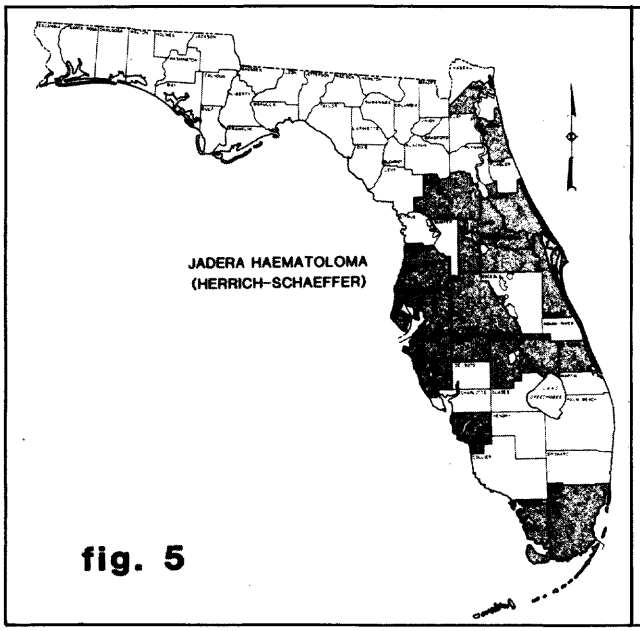

fig. 5

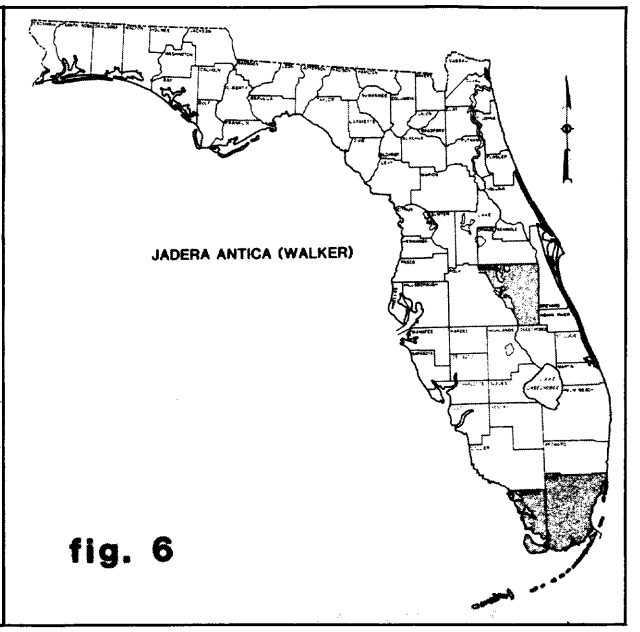

fig. 6

SURVEY AND DETECTION: Examine ground areas under trees shedding seeds, particularly goldenrain trees, where bugs come to feed on the seeds. Look for the dark, red-shouldered, 1/2 inch long adults primarily on leaves, stems, and ground areas. Nymphs are mostly a conspicuous red color. Submit specimens in vials of 75% isopropyl alcohol.

CONTROL: In most instances, no attempts to control Jadera spp. are necessary. Documentation is lacking as far as this being a plant pest of any consequence. A small concentration on a plant often can be destroyed by hand collecting. If the bugs are a nuisance in lawns or playgrounds, raking to remove the seeds that the bugs are feeding on should be helpful. If nonpesticide methods are not practical, consult the County Agricultural Extension Agent. According to the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act, all pesticides must be handled and applied in strict accordance with directions on the pesticide label. For chemical control, the University of Florida Extension Service (personal communication) has suggested using 25% diazinon EC at the rate of 2 teaspoons per gallon of water. Repeat in 10-14 days if necessary. Read container label carefully for use directions, application techniques, and precautions.

LITERATURE CITED:

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