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MICROBIAL CONTROL OF *NEPHANTIS SERINOPA* MEYRICK, THE BLACK HEADED CATERPILLAR OF COCONUT WITH DIFFERENT FORMULATIONS OF THE BACTERIUM *BACILLUS THURINGIENSIS* BERLINER.

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The effectiveness of four commercial preparations Dipel, Thuricide, Biotrol and Bactospeine of the sporeforming bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner was studied in the laboratory for the control of *Nephantis serinopa* Meyrick, the black headed caterpillar of coconut. Fresh coconut leaflets thoroughly sprayed on both surfaces with known concentrations of the four formulations were fed to larvae of the pest over a period of four to five days. The test suspensions of the four formulations were so prepared as to give as far as possible equivalent spore concentrations. Subsequent feeding was on fresh unsprayed leaflets until the experiment was concluded at the end of two weeks from the date of spraying. All four commercial preparations caused high mortality of the larvae. In view of the promising preliminary results with these formulations, further studies on the use of this bacterial pathogen appear to be well justified.