

OVIPOSITIONAL PREFERENCE OF THE PARASITE *TRATHALA FLAVOORBITALIS*
FOR LARVAE OF THE BRINJAL FRUIT BORER *LEUCINOIDES ORBONALIS*

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The larvae of *L.orbonalis* that live inside the shoots and fruits of the brinjal plant are parasitized by the Ichneumonid *Trathala flavoorbitalis*. The ovipositional preference of the parasite for pest larvae of different instars was investigated by two methods.

(a) Five larvae ie host larvae each of instars 1st - 5th were placed in a

container and a single female parasite was released into it.

(b) 10 host larvae of a given instar were exposed to a single female parasite. In this manner, larvae from all 5 instars were exposed.

Careful observations were made of the ovipositional preference of the parasite. Parasitized larvae were kept separately for further development until adult emergence. Of the 1st - 5th instar larvae when offered separately, the first instar was least preferred for oviposition. The few (24%) that were selected for oviposition were only stung and mutilated and hence did not survive. Of the 2nd instar larvae 18% were similarly subjected to mutilation, and only 32% were parasitized. Of them, only 8% developed successfully. Of the 3rd - 5th instar larvae, none were mutilated and all were successfully parasitized. Highest parasite emergence occurred following oviposition in 4th instar larvae. Similar results were obtained when 1st - 5th instar larvae were offered together.

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