

### **B-13 Population distribution of cardamom stem borer, (*Dichocrocis punctiferalis* (Guen) (Lepidoptera, Pyralidae)**

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Cardamom stem and capsule borer, *Dichocrocis punctiferalis* (Guen), is a major pest of cardamom *Elettaria cardamomum* (Maton), in Sri Lanka. The pest damages the pseudostems, panicles, rhizomes and immature pods of the plant. Damaged pseudostems become dry showing dead heart symptoms. Larva feeds on immature seeds resulting in empty pods. The distribution pattern of the pest is worth studying, to implement a control programme for the pest. This study was carried out at Gammaduwa Research Sub Station, from January 1994 to December 1995. Total number of pseudostems, number of infested pseudostems and number of larvae per bush were recorded monthly from selected 150 bushes during the study period. A light trap was installed near the experimental field to monitor the adult population. Weather data was collected from the weather station at Gammaduwa Research Station.

Results revealed that the cardamom stem borer larval and adult populations were zero in the months of January and February and started to increase from March and reached the maximum level (51 larvae) in June. The population then declined from July to zero level during January. The data collected showed a clear relationship between the population levels and the rainfall pattern of the area, especially in the Yala season. At harvesting stage 17% of the harvested pods were damaged by the borer. The number of larvae in the bush showed a positive relationship with the bush size. The data indicates that, maximum attention should be paid in the period of March to May, to control this pest.