

Clear wing moth, (*Synanthidon sp.*), a new pest damage in cinnamon, (*Cinnamomum verum*) cultivations and its damaging severity in Sri Lanka

Cinnamon is the highest foreign exchange earning crop among export agricultural crops, existing about 16000 ha. And earning about 30 Mn. US \$ annually as foreign exchange. Sri Lanka shares about 70 percent of world true cinnamon. The main cultivation area of cinnamon is the southern part of the Island, coming under the agro ecological zones of low country wetzone (WL) and low country intermediate zone (IL). A number of insect pests are been reported in cinnamon in Sri Lanka, but they are not economically important. A new insect pest, a woodborer moth, was found in cinnamon recently. Its damages were observed in basal trunks, which are remaining after harvesting of growing cinnamon stems (shoots). Dark brown excreta coming out from the damaged holes can be seen. Sometimes stems break at the point of damage. A survey was carried out in the main cinnamon growing districts, Viz; Galle, Matara and Hambantota to estimate the damaging severity of the pest.

The pest was identified only up to the generic level by the International Institute of Entomology, U.K., as *Synanthedon sp.*

The woodborer moth damage was observed in all the cinnamon cultivations surveyed. No significant difference in damage was found among the districts and the mean percentage of damage was 8.95 ± 3.0 . Percentage damage was increased with the increase of the age of the plantation. No damage was observed in very young cultivations (below 2 years of age) and highest damage (11.49 ± 9.59) was observed in very old plantations (above 40 years of age) There were three different harvesting intervals and fertilizer application intervals in the farmers' fields viz; six months, eight months and one year. It was found that, fields, which are harvested and fertilized in six month intervals, had higher percentage of damage (13.17%) than the fields, which are harvested and fertilized eight months or one year intervals (7.2 and 7.52%).