

Wasps associated with a rice field ecosystem

The study on trap-nesting and other wasps was conducted in a rice field in Siyambalapitiya in the Kegalle District, during a single cultivation cycle. Wasps that frequent the rice plants, the bund and peripheral vegetation were collected using a sweep net. Stem-nesting wasps were studied using trap nests of different diameter [2.0 - 6.4 mm], texture [wooden/bamboo] and colour [natural/yellow/green]. A bundle of 12 traps were placed at each of 7 selected locations in the paddy field/. Traps were checked every fortnight for occupancy.

The nests yielded 19 wasps belonging to 3 species. Their duration of development ranged from 18 - 23 days and their nest architecture was similar. *Rhynchium brunneum* [F.] [Eumenidae] nested in wooden traps of natural colour with a diameter of 6.4 mm. *Trypoxylon thaianum* Tsuneki [Larridae] nested in similar traps of diameter of 3.2 mm. *Auplopus mutabilis* [Sm.] [Pompilidae] nested in bamboo traps having a diameter of 5.0 mm. Sweep net collection yield 13 species of wasps belonging to 7 families [Chrysididae, Eumenidae, Larridae, Nyssonidae, Pompilidae, Sphecidae and Vespidae]. Thus, a total of 13 species of wasps in 11 genera belonging to 7 families were collected and identified during the study. The presence of wasps was especially evident during the reproductive and grain ripening stages of the rice plant. This preliminary study reflects the diversity and abundance of predatory wasps in a paddy field ecosystem that may help in the control of paddy pests.