

Research Note

## DAMAGE TO COCONUT BY MEREDOLUS CO. CURCULIONIDAE

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During a routine inspection of a group of palms at Yakwila (North Western Province) showing abnormally scorched leaflets of uppermost fronds, a large number of weevils were found in the axils and in the opened inflorescences. The insect has been identified as *Meredolus* sp. (Coleoptera; Curculionidae).

In affected palms, which were scattered, leaflets in more than five fronds around the bud were completely scorched (see Fig. 1 and 2). In affected fronds all leaflets were completely brown and dry. A few centimeters at the base of the leaflet were left green. The leaflets of the flag leaf showed necrotic patches near the mid rib, which extended outwards (Fig. 3). A large number of adult weevils were observed amongst the leaflets in the flag leaf. The corresponding inflorescences of affected fronds were without any button nuts. There were indications of premature button nut fall and damage to the secondary axes of the inflorescence (Fig. 4)

The genus *Meredolus* has been erected by Marshall with *M. cocotis* as the type specimen (Marshall, 1935). Marshall has recorded this insect from the male flowers of the coconut palm in the Solomon Islands. A detailed description of the insect is given by Marshall (1935). It has also been reported as a pest in the Solomon Islands by Lever (1937).

This is a new record for Sri Lanka, where it has been recorded from only one locality. Although the initial damage was considerable there was a natural decline of the pest with time. The species recorded from Sri Lanka differs taxonomically from *M. cocotis* (M. L. Cox, personal communication).

We are grateful to Dr. M. L. Cox of the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, London for identifying the insect. Our thanks are also due to Mr. S. V. Sinnatamby for his help.

### REFERENCES

- Lever, R. J. A. W. (1937). Economic insects and biological control in the British Solomon Island. *Bull. ent. Res.* 28, 325-331.
- Marshall, G. A. K. (1935). Four new Derelominae (Col: Curculionidae). *Stylops* 4, 137-140.



FIG. 1. A coconut palm attacked by *Meredolus* sp. surrounded by healthy palms.



FIG. 2. An affected frond with scorched leaflets.

