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NOTES ON LYMIRE EDWARDSI GROTE, THE RUBBER TREE CATERPILLAR

Lymire edwardsi was assigned by Grote to the genus Scepsis when he described it. Under this old generic name on page 361 of volume II of “Insect Life”, Dr. H. G. Dyar described the larval stages in detail.

Distribution: Dr. Dyar obtained his larvae from Dade County, Florida. Since this work was done, Dade County has been split up to form a part of Palm Beach and Broward counties. The specimen or specimens which were described by Grote were taken in Florida but there is no way of placing the definite location in the state. During the fall of 1928, specimens were sent in from Vero Beach, in Indian River County, which is between one-third and one-half the distance up the coast from the southern tip of Florida. Specimens were also collected at St. Petersburg in Pinellas County. These latter had nearly defoliated a fourteen foot rubber (Ficus sp.) tree. From these localities one would draw the conclusion that Lymire edwardsi is of general distribution where its host may grow which is the more semitropical area of Florida.

Parasites: There are two important parasites of Lymire edwardsi, one a hymenopterous, Brachymeria robusta (Crest), and the other a dipterous, Phorocera claripellis Macq. From the sixty pupae and larvae coming to us only two moths emerged. This indicates over a ninety-six percent parasitization. The Tachina flies were more numerous from the material from Vero Beach, but there were a few of the Brachymeria also. The material from St. Petersburg produced about equal numbers of these parasites.

The writer wishes to thank Dr. O. A. Johannsen for identification of the Diptera and Prof. Harold Morrison for that of the Hymenoptera.

H. E. Bratley.