

A SPITTLEBUG, PROSAPIA BICINCTA (SAY)^{1/} (HOMOPTERA:CERCOPIIDAE)^{2/}

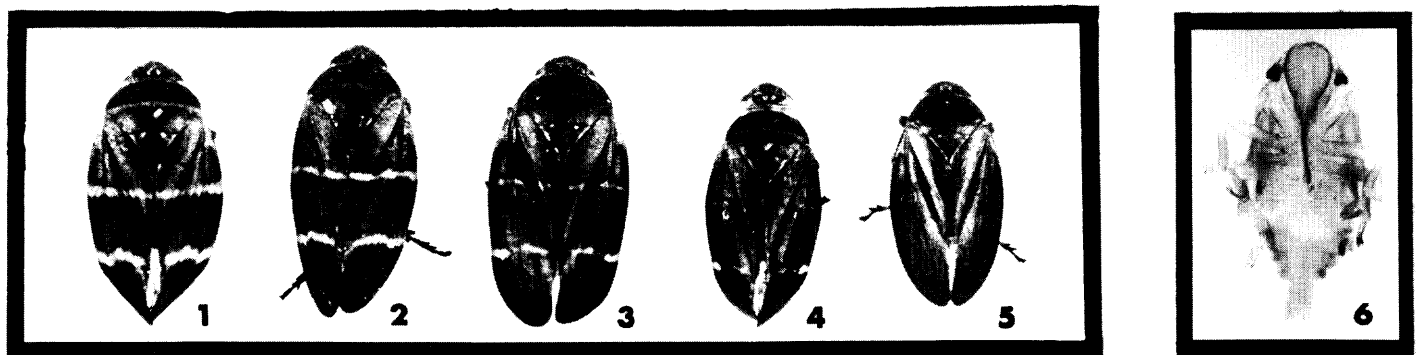
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ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE:-- THIS SPECIES ORDINARILY IS NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM, BUT ON OCCASIONS IT HAS INJURED PANGOLA GRASS (DIGITARIA DECUMBENS) IN THE EVERGLADES (GENUNG, 1955), HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO COASTAL BERMUDA GRASS (CYNODON DACTYLON) IN SOUTH CAROLINA (TOMBES AND PASS, 1961), GEORGIA (BECK, 1961), AND HAS BEEN REPORTED ABUNDANT ON THIS HOST IN NORTHERN FLORIDA. SOMETIMES IT MAY DAMAGE OTHER KINDS OF PLANTS SUCH AS SUGAR CANE (SACCHARUM OFFICIANARUM) AND HOLLY (ILEX OPACA). ON HOLLY THE ADULT FEEDING ON OLDER LEAVES RESULTS IN LIGHT BLOTCHES APPEARING ON THE UNDERSIDE. IF TENDER, DEVELOPING LEAVES ARE ATTACKED, THE USUAL RESULT IS DISTORTION, STUNTING, DISCOLORATION, AND NECROTIC AREAS. IN CUBA THE SUBSPECIES FRATERNA (UHLER) WAS REPORTED AS A PEST OF "PARANA" (PANICUM NUMIDIANUM) AND OCCASIONALLY ATTACKING SUGAR CANE AND PARA GRASS (PANICUM PURPURASCENS). GRASSES RESPOND TO HEAVY SPITTLEBUG INFESTATIONS BY TENDING TO YELLOW AND DRY OUT. CONTROL MEASURES ON COASTAL BERMUDA GRASS CONSIST OF WINTER BURNING OF REFUSE, AND GOOD PASTURE MANAGEMENT (BECK, 1961). IF THE PASTURE CONTAINS CLOVER, IT CAN BE BURNED IN LATE FALL, OTHERWISE, LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED. CHEMICAL CONTROL OF SPITTLEBUGS IN EVERGLADES PASTURES HAS BEEN OBTAINED WITH 3 LBS. OF WETTABLE TOXAPHENE IN 100 GALLONS OF WATER PER ACRE, USING GROUND EQUIPMENT.

HOSTS:-- ADULTS HAVE BEEN FOUND RESTING OR FEEDING ON A WIDE VARIETY OF WOODY AND HERBACEOUS PLANTS, BUT NYMPHS ARE USUALLY FOUND IN LOW HERBACEOUS SITUATIONS. NYMPHS HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON MANY SPECIES OF GRASSES INCLUDING CENTIPEDE (EREMOCHLOA OPHIUROIDES), ST.AUGUSTINE (STENOTAPHRUM SECUNDATUM), AND THOSE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED. TAMBURO AND BUTCHER (1955) REPORTED ADULTS AND NYMPHS ON MANY TWIGS AND BRANCHES OF BARBADOS CHERRY (MALPIGHIA GLABRA).

DISTRIBUTION:-- EASTERN UNITED STATES FROM MASSACHUSETTS AND FLORIDA WEST TO KANSAS AND TEXAS. FOUND IN ALL GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF FLORIDA WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE LOWER KEYS.

IDENTIFICATION:-- THE ADULTS ARE ABOUT 3/8 INCH LONG. THEY ARE TYPICALLY DARK BROWN WITH TWO DISTINCT BANDS ACROSS THE WINGS AND A MORE NARROW ORANGE BAND ON THE THORAX BETWEEN THE HUMERAL ANGLES, BUT OCCASIONALLY, UNBANDED SPECIMENS ARE ENCOUNTERED. THE SYSTEMATIC POSITION OF THE DARK FORM IS DEBATABLE BUT IT IS PROBABLY ONLY A VARIETY. THE RATHER LARGE SIZE, OVAL SHAPE, AND CHARACTERISTIC COLORATION EASILY DISTINGUISHES THIS SPECIES FROM OTHER LOCAL SPITTLEBUGS. NYMPHAL ACTIVITY CAN BE SPOTTED READILY BY OBSERVING THE FROTH OR SPITTLE. ANY SUCH EVIDENCE IN LAWNS OR PASTURES, USUALLY AROUND SOIL LEVEL, MOST PROBABLY WOULD BE BICINCTA IN FLORIDA.



PROSAPIA BICINCTA (SAY), ADULT MALES, SHOWING VARIATION IN FLORIDA SPECIMENS.

A NYMPH.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: E.M. COLLINS, DIV. OF PLANT INDUSTRY

SOME REFERENCES:-- BECK, W.W. 1961. OBSERVATIONS ON DAMAGE TO COASTAL BERMUDA GRASS BY PROSAPIA BICINCTA, A SPITTLEBUG. BULL. ENTOMOL. SOC. AM. 7(3):160,165 (ABSTR.); DOERING, K.C. 1930. SYNOPSIS OF THE FAMILY CERCOPIIDAE IN NORTH AMERICA. J. KANSAS ENTOMOL. SOC. (3):53-64, (4):81-108; GENUNG, W.G. 1955. CONTROL OF INSECTS AND RELATED PESTS OF PASTURES. FLORIDA UNIV. AGR. EXPT. STA. ANN. REPT. 1954/55. 235-6; TAMBURO, S.E., AND F. GRAY BUTCHER. 1955. BIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF THE FLORIDA DUSKY WING SKIPPER, AND PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF OTHER INSECTS ON BARBADOS CHERRY. FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGIST 38(2):69; TOMBES, A.S., AND B.C. PASS. 1961. NOTES ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOMASPIS BICINCTA (SAY). FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGIST 44(4):189.

^{1/}GENERIC SYNONYMS: CERCOPIIS, MONECPHORA, TOMASPIS.

^{2/}CONTRIBUTION No. 14, ENTOMOLOGY SECTION.