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WEST INDIAN DRYWOOD TERMITE FOUND IN NEW ZEALAND

In January this year the occupiers of a house in Waikanae noted flying termites emerging from wooden items that they had brought into New Zealand after living in South America for some time. They called in a pest control firm who recognised that the termites were not native and informed the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The termites were identified as *Cryptoteremes brevis*, the West Indian drywood termite. This species, which is considered internationally to be the most destructive drywood termite, is native to South and Central America. It has spread to most non-Asian tropical and sub-tropical areas including the Caribbean, Australia (Queensland) some Pacific Islands, Africa and North America. It has caused considerable economic damage to timber in service wherever it has become established. This is the first time it has been found in New Zealand although it has been intercepted at ports on numerous occasions.

MAF removed the wooden items containing the termites and fumigated them. After surveying neighbouring properties for the presence of the termite (none were found) MAF arranged for the fumigation of the house in early October. The fumigant used was sufuryl fluoride. This gas is used routinely for the fumigation of drywood termites in North America and Australia. Contrary to some press reports it is not the first time it has been used in New Zealand. It was used on occasion to fumigate termites and other wood-boring insects intercepted at ports in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Queensland has a long history of fumigating buildings for *Cryptotermes brevis* – it was first reported there in 1964. Since 1976 the Queensland Government has fumigated over 600 buildings at an average annual cost of $500,000. In 1979 Parliament House in Brisbane was fumigated for *C. brevis* and at the time it was the largest building ever fumigated in the Southern Hemisphere. It may still hold this record.

In California, Florida and Hawaii control of *C. brevis* costs in excess of $100 million each year.

MAF plans to carry out regular checks on the Waikanae property for the next 10 years. This will include checks on some neighbouring properties and using insect traps during the summer to monitor flying adults. For further information see http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/west-indian-drywood-termite

John Bain

Above: Covering Parliament House in Queensland prior to fumigation for termites.

Below: *Cryptotermes brevis* (Source: Azores Bioportal)

*Newsletter of the **Scion Forest Protection team**, and the **Forest Health Reference Laboratory** (incorporating the Forest Research Mycological Herbarium (NZFRI-M), the Forest Research Culture Collection (NZFS), and the National Forest Insect Collection (FRNZ). Edited by John Bain, New Zealand Forest Research Institute Ltd, Private Bag 3020, Rotorua. <john.bain@scionresearch.com> Web site < http://www.scionresearch.com/biosecurity >*

NATIVE CATERPILLARS FEEDING ON MANGEAO BERRIES

Three species of native moths were collected in January and February 2011 from the berries of mangeao trees, *Litsea calicaris*, growing on the slopes of Mt St John, Remuera, Auckland. The moths were *Lopharca insolita*, *Cnephasia jactatana*, (Tortricidae) and probably *Sceliodes cordalis*, (Crambidae). They were collected during Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry high risk site surveys. Larvae and adults were sent to Scion and Robert Hoare at Landcare Research for identification.

Lopharca insolita larvae are known only from native mangeao trees and were infesting an estimated 80% of the heavy crop of berries. The larvae turn bright red/orange just before pupation. Mangeao seedlings are quite common beneath their parent trees in native forests so this heavy feeding by moth larvae may have a limited affect of germination.

One *Cnephasia jactatana* larva emerged from a berry and pupated in rolled up leaves. Known as black-lyre leaf roller from the distinctive makings on the wings, the larva of this moth can be a pest of commercial crops such as kiwi fruit.

***Lopharca insolita* larva beside mangeao berries**

Left:
***Cnephasia jactatana* moth**

Right:
***Secliodes* larva beside *L. insolita* pupa**

One larva of what was thought to be poroporo fruit caterpillar, *Sceliodes cordalis* , was found inside a very pulpy berry. Rearing to adult failed but the larva is very distinctive. This species normally feeds on the berries of Solanaceae species, particularly the native poroporo, *Solanum aviculare*.

Chris Inglis, SPS Biosecurity, Auckland

EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In mid September John Bain attended a meeting of the Scientific Advisory Panel for European house borer (EHB) (*Hylotrupes bajulus*) in Perth, Western Australia. EHB is a very serious pest of untreated softwood timbers, particularly pines. It was first detected in Western Australia in 2004. Following the discovery immediate action was taken to determine the extent of EHB infestation, and to prevent further spread. Initially the plan was to attempt eradication of the borer and action taken resulted in big reductions in EHB populations in affected areas and containment of the pest to defined Perth locations.

Recently it became apparent that eradication was not feasible. The response to the incursion is now in a transition from eradication to a management programme, changing its focus to the implementation of an interstate regulatory system. As part of this transition, new legislation will be introduced by other states and territories that place restrictions on the movement of pine wood (including timber, pallets, packaging, dunnage and furniture) out of Western Australia.

John Bain

NEW RECORDS

We are no longer publishing details of new records. For further information on results of MAF funded programmes see MAF's Biosecurity magazine (http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/publications/biosecurity-magazine/index.htm) where information on new biosecurity identifications is regularly published.

John Bain

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