

THE BUGWEED LACE BUG

(*Gargaphia decoris*)

A natural enemy of **BUGWEED**

(*Solanum mauritianum*)

in South Africa

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DOSSIERS ON BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENTS AVAILABLE TO AID ALIEN PLANT CONTROL

DESCRIPTION

The adult bugs are pale brown, about 5mm in length and have two black bars on their transparent lace-like wings. The adults are excellent fliers.

LIFE CYCLE

The adults lay batches of about 160 eggs on the lower side of the leaf. The females guard the eggs that hatch after 2 weeks. The immature stages (called nymphs) feed in large groups. The nymphs are spiny, have no wings and grow into adults after 3 weeks. Adults can lay eggs when 3 weeks old and will continue to lay egg batches during their 2-3 month life. The insects may have several generations during the year.

FEEDING DAMAGE

Both adults and nymphs are sap-suckers and feed mostly on the leaf undersurfaces. Feeding is seen as the presence of white chlorotic specks on the upper leaf surfaces and by the faeces, which are deposited around the edges of the upper leaf surfaces, forming a black 'border' on the leaf.

IMPACT ON BUGWEED

Extensive feeding causes the leaves to turn yellow, dry out and drop off the plants prematurely. High feeding levels may slow down the very rapid growth rates of bugweed plants and reduce the massive amounts of seeds produced. This will allow the weed to be more easily and cheaply controlled by the usual herbicide and hand pulling methods



Adult lace bugs on bugweed leaf



Adult lace bug with eggs



Lace bug nymphs (young) with parent



Damage caused to bugweed plant by lace bugs



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PHONE: Weedbuster Toll-free Helpline: 0800 005 376
WEBSITE: PPRI website is located via links from the Agricultural Research Council website: www.arc.agric.za

