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Occurrence of *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) (Homoptera, Pseudococcidae) on the inflorescence of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss in Assam, India

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ABSTRACT: *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) was reported for the first-time on the inflorescence of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss during its sporadic flowering in Kamrup Rural district of the state of Assam. Egg cases, nymphs and adults of *A. pretiosa* were found in the inflorescence. They were attended by the black ants *Technomyrmex albipes*. © 2024 Association for Advancement of Entomology

KEYWORDS: Bamboo, mealy bugs, life stages, ants

Bamboos are characterized by two types of flowering, *viz*. sporadic and gregarious (Biswas *et al*., 2016; Das *et al*., 2018). In the former, flowering takes place at a time only in a few culms or a few culms of a population while in the latter, flowering occurs within a brief interval of time amongst all the individuals of a species growing across large areas leading to the mortality of culms after flowering (Janzen, 1976; Xie *et al*., 2016). In India, flowering of *Bambusa bambos* (L.) Voss (=*B. arundinacea*) has been reported from different states *viz*., Assam (Sarma *et al*., 2010; Sharma and Borthakur, 2018), Uttar Pradesh (Malik, 2016) and Uttarakhand (Chandra *et al*., 2022).

Sporadic flowering in two clusters of bamboos has been observed in the Mandakata area of the Kamrup Rural district of Assam (located at 26°13.083' N; 91°44.024' E) during March to May 2023. Egg cases of *Antonina pretiosa* (Ferris) (Homoptera, Pseudococcidae) along with roaming black ants *Technomyrmex albipes* were observed in the inflorescence (Fig. 1 A, B-D, F). These egg cases were 2-3mm long and around 2mm wide, brown-black and covered by white cottony substances (Fig. 1 F-H), distinct long anal wax tube (Fig. 1 F), and around 0.2mm long eggs inside the cases (Fig. 1 I). Adult female insect was around 4mm long (Fig. 1 D-E) and nymphs were 0.4mm long and 0.2mm wide (Fig. 1 J).

Association of insects with bamboos has already been reported from India (Mathew and Varma, 1988; Kazmi and Husen, 1999; Koshy *et al*., 2001;

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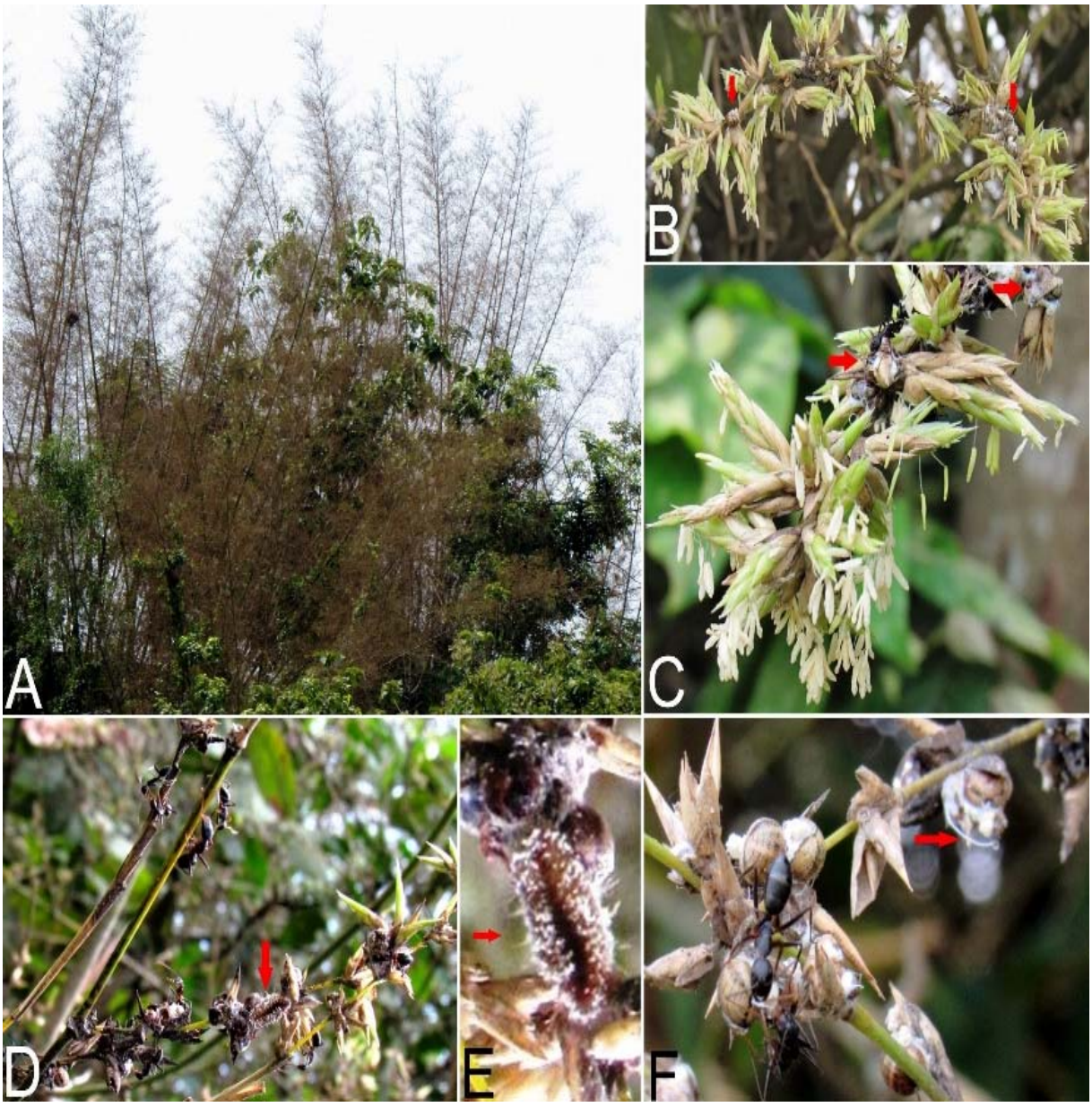
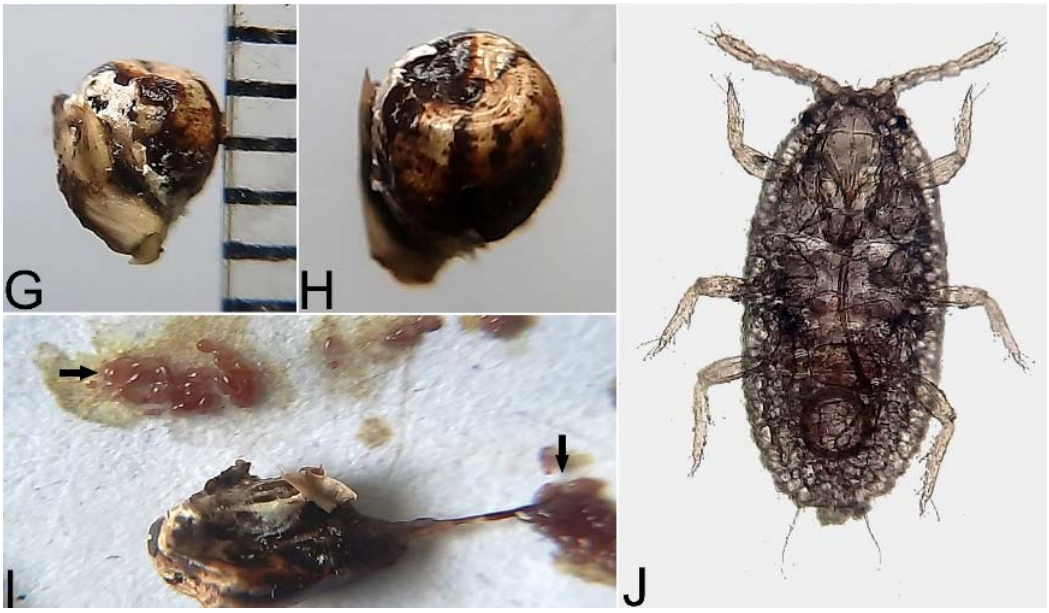


Fig. 1: A. Flowering of *Bambusa bambos.* B-C *Antonina pretiosa* egg cases (arrow) and black ants, D-E. Adult *A. pretiosa* (arrow) in bamboo inflorescence, F. Association of black ants with egg cases of *A. pretiosa* (arrow showing long anal wax tube)



G-H. Egg cases of *Antonina pretiosa,* I. Eggs (arrow) inside the egg case, J. Nymph of *A. pretiosa*.

Joshi *et al*., 2008; Varma and Sajeev, 2015). *Antonina graminis* (Maskell) (=*A. indica*), *A. pretiosa* and *A. zonata* (Green) are common sap suckers on the foliage and culms of different bamboo species in the country (Varma and Sajeev, 2015). Although *A. pretiosa* commonly occurs in the nodes of the stem and under the leaf sheath of bamboo (Ülgentürk *et al*., 2014), its occurrence in the inflorescence of bamboos has not been so far reported.

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