

UNUSUAL OVIPOSITION SITE BY A COMMON EMIGRANT *CATOPSILIA POMONA* BUTTERFLY

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On 25th October 2023, at 08:52 hrs. inside the campus of Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi, India (28.496499 N; 77.203228 E; elev. 278 m asl), an adult aphid was observed on a fresh Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*) leaf with a Common Emigrant's *Catopsilia pomona* (Fabricius, 1775) egg laid on its dorsal thorax. This Amaltas plant was growing beside the wall of a small artificial pond. These Amaltas plants are allowed to grow upto a certain height (approximately 20-25cm), before being pruned by gardeners, but then they regrow. Notably, Amaltas serves as the host plant for Common Emigrant butterflies.

In this particular setting, two adjacent Amaltas plants caught my attention. One of them hosted a small group of 3 to 4 caterpillars alongside several eggs of the Common Emigrant butterfly on its leaves. The neighbouring plant had clusters of eggs primarily on its fresh leaves.

While attempting to capture images of these eggs, I noticed an aphid on one of the leaves. Upon closer examination, I observed that the aphid bore a peculiar feature: a butterfly egg had been laid on its

thorax by a Common Emigrant butterfly. The extra burden did not seem to hinder the aphid from moving around. There is no doubt that this is not a regular phenomenon and the egg was very likely erroneously laid on the aphid, who might simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

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insights.



Fig 1: Common Emigrants caterpillar feeding on Amaltas leaves.



Fig 2: Common Emigrant caterpillar feeding on Amaltas leaves



Fig 3: Adjacent Amaltas plant with eggs on fresh leaves



Fig 4: Common Emigrant butterfly's egg laid on aphid



Fig 5: Common Emigrant butterfly's egg laid on aphid