

# SEVERE INFESTATION OF *PODAGRICA FUSCICORNIS* (CHEVROLAT, 1837) (CHRYSOMELIDAE) ON A NEW HOST PLANT *ACALYPHA INDICA* (L.) (EUPHORBIACEAE) FROM ODISHA, INDIA

ASHIRWAD TRIPATHY

Department of Silviculture and Agroforestry, Faculty of Forestry, Birsa Agricultural University, Kanke, Ranchi, Jharkhand, 834006  
[ashirwadaspire351@gmail.com](mailto:ashirwadaspire351@gmail.com)

Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

*Podagarica fuscicornis* (Chevrolat, 1837) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Galerucinae) is a species of small jumping beetle. Chrysomelids are leaf beetles but, unlike other leaf beetles, they have a characteristically enlarged femora. The enlarged femora allows these insects to jump when they are disturbed, due to which they are also known as flea beetles. The adult flea beetles feed on plant leaves, stems and petals. During normal feeding, small holes are made on the leaf surface but during heavy infestation they damage a larger area by the combined effect of all the individuals. They are considered as a pest on many agricultural crops including mustard and rapeseed. Numerous garden plants are also attacked by these beetles, which feed on the flowers of *Gardenia* and *Rothmannia* species. *Podagarica fuscicornis* mainly infests plants belonging to Malvaceae family (Dobson, 2001). Common marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis* L.), *Alcea rosea*, *Lavatera*, *Malva*, Cotton (*Gossypium* sp.) and Kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) are commonly infested by these beetles (Farahbakhsh, 1961; Modarres Awal, 1997; Bohinc *et al.*, 2011; Troukens, 2018). Adults feeds on flowers and leaves while larvae feed on the roots. Also, it has been recorded damaging plants belonging to Lamiaceae and Urticaceae (Petitpierre, 1985). The global distribution of *P. fuscicornis* is from the Canary Is., Portugal and the U.K. eastwards through the European

Mediterranean region (as far north as Poland, Denmark and Ukraine) to Asia (Azerbaijan, Turkey, Western Arabian Peninsula, India (Kerala)) and southwards to Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco) (Bohinc *et al.*, 2011; Sebastian & Akhilesh 2016; Aslan & Ghahari, 2017). Here, a new host plant was recognised as *Acalypha indica* (L.) (Euphorbiaceae). Despite of its medicinal properties the plant is also considered as an obnoxious weed throughout India. This infestation was observed in the morning 9:14 am on 11 October, 2019 in Jemadeipur Village (20.17967°N, 85.09559°E), Nayagarh Dist., Odisha, India. The feeding behaviour was observed in the field. The specimens were collected in vials containing 70% ethanol and sent to entomologists at the Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture, OUAT, Bhubaneswar, Odisha for proper identification of the specimen. The present record appears to extend the known distribution of this species eastwards from Kerala to Odisha.

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Fig. 1-4: showing severe infestation of *Podagrica fuscicornis* (Chevrolat, 1837) on *Acalypha indica* (L.) (Euphorbiaceae).