

TRIUMFETTA RHOMBOIDEA (MALVACEAE) AS NEW LARVAL HOST PLANT FOR THE GREAT EGGFLY BUTTERFLY *HYPOLIMNAS BOLINA* (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

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The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) Nature Reserve is a forested area spread over 33 acres and is nestled between Dadasaheb Phalke Chitra Nagari (aka Film City) and Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. The Reserve also has a small butterfly garden spread over an area of around quarter of an acre.

The Great Eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) is a common butterfly, seen during the monsoon months in the forests of SGNP and BNHS Nature Reserve, Mumbai.

On 20.viii.2021, while searching for butterfly caterpillars near the butterfly garden, the authors found a large dark brown caterpillar on a Burr Bush *Triumfetta rhomboidea* (Malvaceae) plant, locally known as *Jhinjhardi*. The caterpillar was identified as that of the Great Eggfly using Bhakare & Ogale (2018). It can be differentiated from the similar looking caterpillar of the Blue Oakleaf *Kallima horsfieldii* by the orange head. The caterpillar was collected and kept in a container for rearing. The caterpillar was fed with leaves of the same plant. It was a voracious feeder. The rearing container was cleaned every day.

After 10 days, on 30.viii.2021, the caterpillar pupated on a branch of the same plant (see images) in the container. On 8.ix.2021, after a diapause of 8 days, an adult male butterfly of

Hypolimnas bolina eclosed. The butterfly was released immediately. Identification of the larval host plant was confirmed again once it flowered after 15.Ix.2021.

The previously reported larval host plants of *H. bolina* were summarised by Robinson *et al.* (2010) and later by Nitin *et al.* (2018) as *Phaulopsis imbricata* (Acanthaceae), *Alternanthera sessilis* (Robinson *et al.* 2010) (Amaranthaceae); *Sida rhombifolia* (Malvaceae), *Portulaca oleracea* (Portulacaceae), *Solanum torvum* (Solanaceae), *Elatostema cuneatum*, and *Laportea interrupta* (Urticaceae). Rajagopalan (2005), reported *Triumfetta pentandra* as a new food plant of the Great Eggfly. Wikipedia (Dec, 2021) reports that *H. bolina* caterpillars also feed on *Urtica dioica* and *Malva* species. *Triumfetta rhomboidea* belongs to the last group, but it can be considered as a new Indian larval host plant record for *H. bolina*.

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Fig.1: Great Eggfly LHP caterpillar



Fig.2: Great Eggfly pupa



Fig.3: Great Eggfly male freshly eclosed



Fig.4: *Triumfetta rhomboidae* plant



Fig.5: *Triumfetta rhomboidea* flowers