

## ***BREYNIA RETUSA* (PHYLLANTHACEAE) AS THE LARVAL HOST PLANT OF *BUZARA ONELIA* (LEPIDOPTERA: EREBIDAE)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper confirms *Breynia retusa* as the larval host plant for *Buzara onelia*.

The species under genus *Buzara* Walker, 1865 are known to be specialist feeders favoring genera under Phyllanthaceae family such as *Breynia* J.R. Forst & G. Forst, *Phyllanthus* L., and *Sauropus* Blume (Holloway & Miller, 2003). *Buzara onelia* Guenée, 1852, a widespread moth species of the Oriental Tropics, that has been reported from Indian sub-region, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Sundaland, Philippines, and Japan also feeds on Phyllanthaceae genera *Phyllanthus* and *Sauropus* (Robinson *et al.*, 2010).

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023 around 11am at Sawantwadi, Maharashtra we came across a group of caterpillars resting on the underside of leaves of *Breynia retusa* (Dennst.) Alston, commonly known as

Cup Saucer plant. The leaves were being voraciously eaten by the caterpillars (Fig. 1 A). One of the caterpillars and some of the leaves were collected for rearing. The caterpillar kept on feeding on the leaves and there was a shortage of fresh leaves. The same plant leaves were collected from a nearby forest area at the base of Sinhagad Valley, Pune. Within 5 days, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023 rolling of leaves by the caterpillar and subsequent formation of pupa was observed (Fig. 1 B, C & D). On 19<sup>th</sup> September, after 10 days, we witnessed the emergence of an adult moth. (E) & (F). Later the moth was identified using Shubhalaxmi (2018).

*B. retusa* is not a recorded host plant for *B. onelia*. Although the larval and pupal stages in southern India were documented by Mrs Alka C Vaidya (unpublished) (Sondhi *et al.*, 2024) but there is no

mention of name of the plant species on which she bred it. Therefore it is clear that *B. retusa* is an unreported host plant of *B.*

*onelia* and the present observation confirms it.

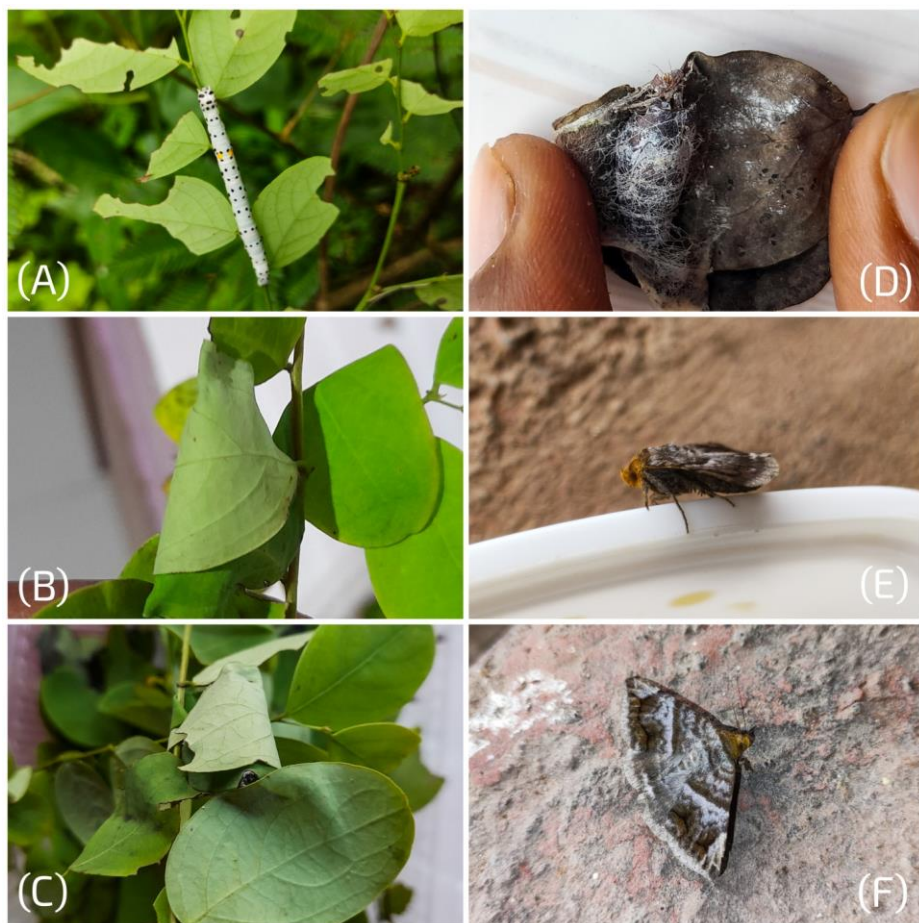


Fig. 1 – (A) Caterpillar of *Buzara onelia* seen on the underside of the leaves of *Breynia retusa* (Cup and Saucer plant). (B) & (C) Rolling of leaves and pupation (hidden inside the rolled leaf). (D) Cocoon of the moth (E) Lateral view of the freshly emerged adult moth. (F) Full open wing view of the moth. (Photos by Shreyas Pattanshetty & Chintan Bhatt).

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