

In view of its abundance and intense susceptibility to weevil infestation (with a maximum of 65%), *Malvastrum coromandelianum* appears to be in certain seasons, the foremost weed host of the cotton stem weevil capable of maintaining fairly large populations in the absence of cotton. The importance of such offseasonal hosts is all the greater because the pest populations even in country cottons during this part of the season are seen to be rather insignificant. Further studies in this line are in progress.

I am thankful to fieldman Royappan for the collection of host plants.
Cotton breeding Station, }

3-10-'36.

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Agricultural Notes.

1. In the costal tracts of Tekkali taluk, Vizagpatam district, where the villagers are able to get fuel from various topes, and where the soils are in bad need of manuring, ryots do not at all waste cattle dung by using it as fuel, but add every bit of it to their fields after careful conservation. Soils are frequently spread over the floor of the cattle sheds for catching cattle urine; and the urinary earth, dung and litter are carefully conserved in pits with great care. It is refreshing to note in this tract where Departmental propaganda was not undertaken till recently the practices in the conservation of cattle manure have been developed to a high degree of perfection. Possibly the availability of fuel, and the hungry nature of the soils requiring manuring are responsible for the adoption of these commendable practices that are proving uphill tasks in other areas.

2. *Erythrina* (*Erythrina indica*) is the popular hedge plant round each holding as it supplies not only the necessary standards to each cultivator, but also timber for boat building. It is claimed that unlike other trees *Erythrina* does not affect the neighbouring crops and can conveniently be planted wherever props for fences are required. In places where white-ant attack is so serious as not to allow any posts in tact even for few months, the introduction of *Erythrina* standards by raising nurseries in the beginning, if necessary, may be encouraged. Its seeds can be got in the tract for mere asking.

3. With the annual depredation of Red Hairy Caterpillar (*Amsacta albistriga*) the villagers in the tract had emigrated largely to Burma. The members left at home find it difficult to cultivate the fields far away. Only the fertile plots adjoining the villages are cropped. The others are being gradually planted with cashewnut, which is not only proving to be a profitable hardy fruit tree for the poor soils, but also is free from the caterpillar pest. This practice can be copied by farmers of other tracts where similar conditions prevail.

4. The introduction of cashew nut did not prove to be an unmixed blessing as the poor patches of fields planted with them affect the neighbouring plots by the spreading roots of cashew. To overcome this, ryots dig deep trenches along sides of fields as is done on Government Farms for experimental plots, and these trenches serve also to trap *Amsacta* caterpillars during the period of their ravages.

5. It is our common experience that filling up gaps in live hedges with any live plant material is difficult, but in the above tract *Pandanus* is freely made use of. The stems when closely planted in the gap immediately serve as barrier and take root quickly. The live fences round each holding support vegetable creepers of bittergourd and *Agakara* (a variety of bitter gourd), by the sale of which a fair income is derived. These creepers are almost of perennial nature—bitter gourd continuing from year to year with self sown seed, and *Agakara* with underground stems.

6. It was found in parts of Tekkali taluk that the Red Hairy Caterpillar (*Amsacta albistriga*) establishes itself as a sort of indigenous pest on some of the mountain sides with *Canthium paraviflorum* (Tel.:— Balusu) shrubs as host, but its presence is not felt in the neighbouring cultivated dry areas since these areas support only ragi crop, the planting of which commences after the hairy caterpillars are full grown and about to pupate. Thus agriculture and pest in these areas have mutual adjustment without any positive interference with one another and is worth copying in other places with similar conditions.

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ABSTRACTS

The Indian Coffee Cess Committee. Under the Indian Coffee Cess Act No. XIV of 1935 has been created a fund derived from the levy of a customs duty of 8 annas per cwt. on all coffee produced in India and taken by sea or by land to any place beyond the limits of British India or Burma. During the year the cess receipts which amounted to over a lakh were actually far more than the estimated amount which was only about Rs. 85,000 per annum. The coffee cess committee is so constituted that the three main interests, the grower, the trader and agricultural expert are directly represented in it. It is composed of a representative from each of the local departments of agriculture of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, a representative for each of the curing, manufacturing and shipping interests, and eleven representatives for coffee growers, of whom Mysore being the premier coffee growing area, has been given the right to send three. In addition, the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research sends a representative to the Committee.

The activities of the committee have been directed along many lines; a coffee marketing survey to collect data relating to the transport, sale, consumption etc. of coffee, the establishment in co-operation with the High Commissioner of an Indian coffee market Expansion Board in London, with the main object of explaining the possibilities of expanding the market for Indian coffee in the United Kingdom and on the Continent, and the launching of a 'Drink Indian coffee' campaign in India itself, are the outstanding achievements of the committee. The last mentioned campaign has included many methods of coffee publicity propaganda, like the employment of attractively dressed waiters to serve coffee in coffee houses, the display of posters and menu cards, the pressing into service of cinemas and newspapers; and for the future is programmed even a demonstration truck.

The committee has also paid attention to the question of adulteration of coffee and have besides made a strong representation to the Government that preference granted to Indian coffee in the United Kingdom be increased from 1 d. to 3 d. per lb.

The committee have opened a Central Information Bureau at Bombay and serious attempts are being made to collect all available data and statistics on the subject.

(Summarised from a leaflet No. 1, October 1936 of the Indian coffee cess committee).

M. R. B.

The absorption of nutrients by two varieties of wheat grown on the black and gray soils of Alberta. By E. K. Woodford and A. G. McCalla. Chemical analyses carried out at five stages of development of Reward and Red Bobs wheat grown on the black and the gray soils of Alberta showed that differences in soil and variety significantly influenced the composition of the plants.