Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Coconut stick insect (102)

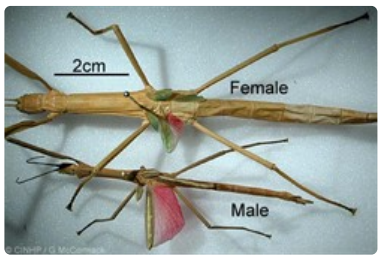

Photo 1. Male and female stick insect, *Graeffea crouani*. Note the larger size of the female, but it has smaller wings and cannot fly.

Photo 2. Male and female stick insect, *Graeffea crouani*.

Photo 3. The stick insects, *Graeffea crouani,* have stripped the coconut fronds leaving only the midribs.

Photo 4. Group of coconuts attacked by the stick insect, *Graeffea crouani*.

Photo 5. Close up coconut palm attacked by the stick insect, *Graeffea crouani.* Note that the palm is recovering from the attack.

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Southwest Pacific. On coconut, sago palm, *Pandanus* and some wild palms. Outbreaks occur, when it is an important pest.
- Adults strip leaflets, leaving the midrib. Occasionally, defoliation occurs over several hundred hectares. Mature palms >25 m most affected.
- Eggs in the crown, fall into the leaf base, leaf litter or weeds. Nymphs climb to the crown. Only males fly.

- Natural enemies: chickens and myna birds take nymphs on the ground. There are parasitoid wasps that have been bred for biocontrol.
- Cultural control: sticky bands around trunks (e.g., “Tanglefoot”); control weeds to expose eggs to sun; intercrop with cocoa – nymphs climb the cocoa and starve; note, lighting fires to smoke the insects no longer acceptable as fires damages the palms.
- Chemical control: none recommended.

Common Name

Coconut stick insect

Scientific Name

Graeffea crouanii

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Information from Waterhouse DF, Norris KR (1987) *Biological Control Pacific Prospects.* Inkata Press. Assistance was also provided by Wilco Liebregts, Eco-Consult Pacific, Fiji. Photo 1 Gerald McCormack, Cook Islands Biodiversity & Natural Heritage. (http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org/). Photos 2-5 Richard Markham, ACIAR, Canberra.

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