

Pacific Pests, Pathogens and Weeds - Online edition

Citrus crusader bug (382)

Common Name

Citrus crusader bug. It is also known as the holy cross bug.

Scientific Name

Mictis profana. In Australia, *Mictis caja* and *Mictis difficilis* are also present. It is a coreid bug, and a leaf-footed species.

Distribution

Indo-Pacific and Oceania. It is recorded from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Samoa, Wallis and Futuna, and Vanuatu.

Hosts

A large number of native species and those grown in plantation, orchards, as vegetables or as ornamentals are hosts, including, acacia, eucalyptus, citrus, papaya, beans and other members of the legume family (Fabaceae), grape, tomato, and rose.

Symptoms & Life Cycle

The adults and nymphs pierce plants with their sucking mouthparts, causing young shoots to wilt (Photo 1).

Nymphs are dark brown without the cross of the adults (Photo 2), although late stages have two prominent orange dots on the upper surface of the abdomen. Adults are 20–25 mm long and 7–10 mm wide, stout, grey to brown with a cream or yellow cross on the back (Photos 3-5). Legs are long, hindlegs are thicker than the others, there are short spines on the shoulders, and antennae have orange tips. Males have spines on their legs, and yellow tips to their antennae. Both sexes squirt a foul-smelling liquid when disturbed.

Impact

This is a minor pest of citrus and wattles. However, it is also a potential biocontrol of *Mimosa pigra*, an important weed.

Detection & inspection

Look for the characteristic cross on the back of adults.

Management

NATURAL ENEMIES

Control measures are seldom necessary as the bugs are under control by birds, spiders, assassin bugs and parasitic wasps.

CULTURAL CONTROL

During growth:

- Handpick adults and nymphs if numbers are low - they are slow moving.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

If there more than 25% of young shoots infested with crusader bugs, spot spray with an insecticide, e.g., a synthetic pyrethroid.

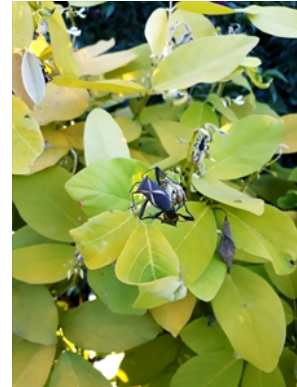


Photo 1. Adult crusader bug, *Mictis profana*, causing wilts on unidentified weed (Vanuatu).



Photo 2. Nymphs of the crusader bug, *Mictis profana* on golden wattle.



Photo 3. Adult crusader bug, *Mictis profana*.



Photo 4. Adult crusader bug, *Mictis profana*, on eggplant.

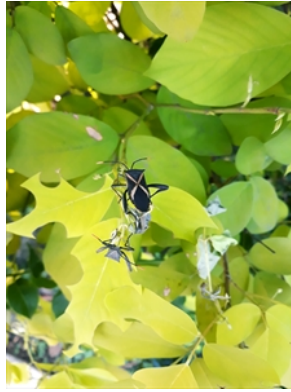


Photo 5. Adult crusader bug, *Mictis profana*.

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Information from Swaine G (1971) *Agricultural Zoology in Fiji*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London; and from Crusader bug (2002) Department of Primary Industries, NSW, Australia.

(<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/citrus/content/insects-diseases-disorders-and-biosecurity/insect-pest-factsheets/crusader-bug>). Photo 2 Patrick_K59 at <https://flickr.com/photos/63175631@N02/23610154572>. Photo 3 Ra3vyn (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mictis_profana#/media/File:CrusaderBug.jpg).

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