

Pacific Pests, Pathogens and Weeds - Online edition

Cassava *Amblypelta* dieback (019)

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Southeast Asia, Oceania. On *Eucalyptus deglupta* and cassava, causing shoot-tip wilt and dieback, nut fall of coconut and pod distortion on cocoa. Also on papaya, mango and passionfruit. Several species. An important pest.
- Eggs laid on or near to the host; nymphs brown with long legs. Adults similar, up to 20 mm, and winged.
- Long needle-like mouth parts cause fruit spotting and distortions, fruit drop, stem cankers, and wilts.
- Natural enemies: encourage ants, e.g., *Oecophylla*.
- Cultural control: difficult as a few insects do much damage; early morning handpicking (cassava).
- Chemical control: PDPs - derris or pyrethrum; or synthetic pyrethroids and malathion.

Common Name

Cassava shoot dieback, coconut premature nut fall

Scientific Name

Amblypelta species. The species on cassava has not been determined.



Photo 1. Shoot dieback on cassava caused by *Amblypelta* on cassava (Solomon Islands).



Photo 2. Close-up of the cankers on a cassava shoot after feeding by *Amblypelta*. Note the damaged areas have small black dots over them; these are the spore-containing sacs of a fungus that has invaded the areas damaged by *Amblypelta*.



Photo 4. Shoot-tip dieback caused by *Amblypelta* on cassava (Malaita, Solomon Islands).



Photo 5. Stem cankers on cassava caused by *Amblypelta* (foreground), with early death of young shoots in background.



Photo 3. Shoot dieback caused by *Amblypelta* on cassava (southern highlands, Papua New Guinea).



Photo 6. Severe cassava stem cankers (lower part) caused by *Amblypelta* with death of stem above (upper part).



Photo 7. *Amblypelta* adult. (Note, this is unlikely to be the species on cassava and coconut. The species on coconut is *Amblypelta cocophaga*; that on cassava has yet to be identified.)



Photo 8. *Amblypelta* nymph. (Note, this is unlikely to be the species on cassava and coconut. The species on coconut is *Amblypelta cocophaga*; that on cassava has yet to be identified.)

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Information from CABI (2017) *Amblypelta cocophaga* (coconut bug). Crop Protection Compendium. (www.cabi.org/cpc). Photos 1&2 Brisbane Insects and Spiders website. (http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_coreidbugs/GreenCoonBugs.htm). Photo 5 Michael Atuai. PNG LNG Livelihood Restoration Team.

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