

Coconut spathe bug (062)

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Southeast Asia (Singapore), Oceania. On coconut and betel nuts. It is not certain that this insect is the cause of the symptoms described below.
- Eggs laid in groups on flowers, on fibre at the base of the fronds, and on leaflets. Nymphs white, then orange and black. Adults, 15 mm long; strong smell when disturbed.
- Adults and nymphs use long mouth parts to suck sap of young coconuts. When bugs are numerous, young nuts fall, and those left are long and dry (i.e., without meat or milk). But it is NOT proven that the bug is the cause.
- Cultural control: *Oecophylla* ants will likely reduce numbers. Plant soursops, and when scale insects have established in the trees, place ant "nests" in the canopy.
- Chemical control: none recommended.

Common Name

Coconut spathe bug

Scientific Name

Axiagastus campbelli. (Note that Photo 1 is provided for reference only; it was **not** taken in the Pacific islands, and may not be a pest of coconuts. It is from the National Taiwan University Insect Museum Digital Archive Project).

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Photo 1 National Taiwan University Insect Museum Digital Archives Project. (http://www.imdap.entomol.ntu.edu.tw/CommonInsectImage.php?Cindex=image&L=C&C_ID=14491). Photo 3 Mani Mua SPC, Sigatoka Research Station, Fiji.

Produced with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research under project PC/2010/090: *Strengthening integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production*, implemented by the University of Queensland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.



Photo 1. *Axiagastus rosmarus*. This is given as an example of a stink bug similar to *Axiagastus campbelli*.



Photo 2. *Axiagastus* species from cocounts in Fiji. Many were removed from palms by Cyclone Harold in April 2020. Possibly, *Axiagastus campbelli*.



Photo 3 'Dry' nuts like those said to be produced on palms infested with *Axiagastus campbelli*. (This image was taken in Guam and sent to PestNet - www.pestnet.org - for identification.)

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