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### **Short Communication**

## **HOLOSTEMMA ADA-KODIEN SCHULT (FAMILY : ASCLEPIADACEAE), A NEW LARVAL FOOD PLANT OF THE BLUE TIGER, *TIRUMALA LIMNIAE* CRAMER (INSECTA : LEPIDOPTERA : NYMPHALIDAE)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

While conducting the studies on the butterfly fauna of Kerala, many larvae of Blue Tiger (*Tirumala limniace* Cramer) butterflies were observed feeding on the plants of *Holostemma ada-kodien* Schult during November 2005 at Narikuni area of the Kozhikode district, Kerala. Three larvae were reared in captivity fed with *Holostemma* plants. The adults emerged after 10-12 days subsequent to pupation.

*Holostemma ada-kodien* Schult. (Asclepiadaceae) is a common climber found along the moist deciduous forests and the sacred groves of midland hills of north Kerala. It is a medicinal plant and locally called *adapathiyam kizhangu*. Its tuber is locally used in traditional medicine for treatment of arthritis and rheumatic pain. Existing literature showed that the Blue Tiger, *Tirumala limniace* is known to feed on *Asclepias curassavica*, *Calotropis gigantea*, *Hoya sp.*, *Tylophora indica*, and *Wattakaka volubilis*, all belonging to the family Asclepiadaceae (Wynter-Blyth, 1957 and Kunte, 2000). Among these, *Wattakaka volubilis* is the most favoured host plant of the Blue Tiger in our locality. The present record of *T. limniace* feeding on *Holostemma ada-kodien* forms a new addition to the existing list of larval food plants known for the Blue Tiger.

The Blue Tiger is one of the commonest danaine species and constitute one of the important participants in the large scale mixed danaine migrations during November. Narikuni area happens to fall in the migratory path of the danaine butterflies in Kerala and *T. limniace* can be seen migrating during November, every year, along with the Dark Blue Tiger (*Tirumala septentrionis*), Double-branded Crow (*Euploea sylvester*) and the Common Crow (*Euploea core*).

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