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A NEW ROOT APHID ON SUGARCANE IN SOUTH INDIA

THE occurrence of aphids in the roots of sugarcane is a rare phenomenon in India. George (1925, 1928) recorded *Tetraneura cyanodonti* var. *Coimbatorensis* George, now known as *T. javensis* v.d. Goot from sugarcane in Coimbatore. Later Nagarajan (1957) described this aphid damage to sugarcane around Coimbatore. Fletcher (1928) reported the occurrence of another species, *Geocia spatulata* Theob. from sugarcane at Pusa.

Recently in the course of field investigations on the white grub damage to sugarcane at the Sugarcane Breeding Institute Farm, another species of aphid, *Forda (Pentaphis) orientalis* George has been observed to damage sugarcane roots. The affected plants, generally ratoons of 8 months age, showed stunted growth and typical symptoms of mosaic on their leaves. The varieties affected are Co. 419 and Co. A. 71-1. Colonies of creamy-white, hemispherical aphids were present in these roots. This species of aphid (Fig. 1)

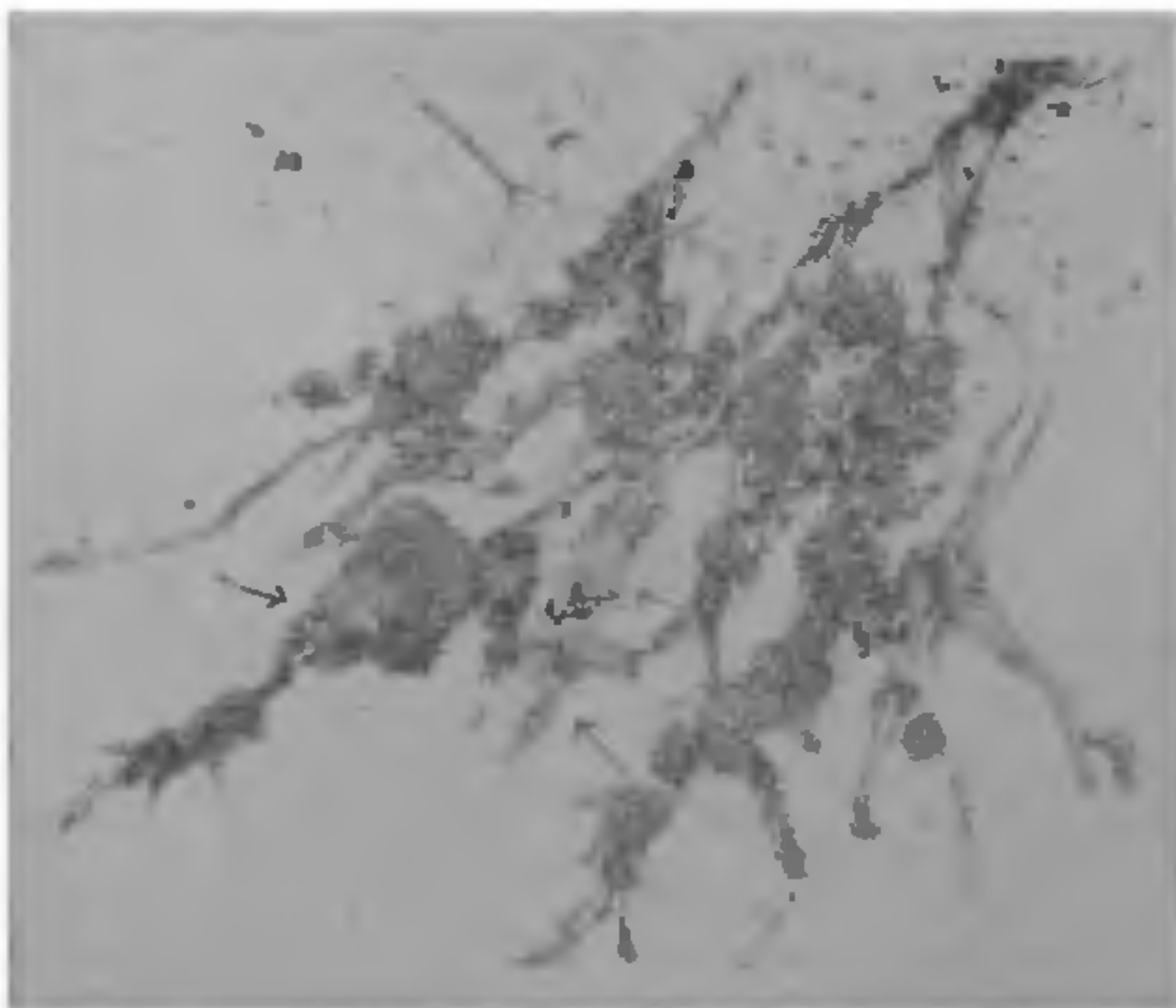


FIG. 1 (a). Sugarcane roots with root-aphids attached.

may be distinguished from *T. javensis* by the absence of long hairs and cornicles. These aphids were present at a depth of 7 to 20 cm below soil surface. Ants were found to be attendant on them. Border rows of cane were heavily infested. The aphids were found to infest the canes during July-September.



FIG. 1 (b). The root-aphid, *Forda orientalis* George.

Earlier, this species has been reported to occur only on sorghum and bajra in Coimbatore by George (1928) and David (1958 and 1969) and on *Bothriochloa insculpta* at Dehra Dun by David (1969). This is the first record of the occurrence of this aphid as a pest in the sugarcane crop.

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Sugarcane Breeding Institute, P. NIRMALA JASMINE,
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