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Bruno MICHEL, Jean ÉTIENNE & Teddy OVARBURY. – A new invasive Thrips in the French Antilles : *Holopothrips tabebuia* (Thys., Phlaeothripidae)

Holopothrips tabebuia Cabrera & Segarra, 2008, was recently described from Porto Rico where it was found for the first time in September 2006 (CABRERA & SEGARRA, 2008). It has also been reported from the Dominican Republic and from Florida (USA) by the same authors. *H. tabebuia* is quite similar to *Holopothrips inquilinus* Bournier, 1993, which was obtained in Guadeloupe in 1985 from galls of Cecidomyiidae (Diptera) on leaves of *Inga ingoides* (Rich.) Willd. (Mimosaceae).

H. tabebuia was detected for the first time in Guadeloupe on July 19th 2007 in the locality of Jarry (district of Baie-Mahault) on *Tabebuia heterophylla* (DC.) Britton (Bignoniaceae). The damage by this insect is characteristic of the species. The injuries begin always on the very young leaves of the trees. The feeding bites of the adults induce huge gall-like deformations on the leaves that become wrinkled and curled with a very hardened epidermis. All the stages of development, from eggs to adults, were found inside the curled leaves. No natural enemies, predator nor parasitoid, have been recorded from Guadeloupe. The true bug *Montandoniola moraguesi* (Puton, 1896) (Hemiptera, Anthocoridae) was mentioned as feeding on *H. tabebuia* in Porto Rico (CABRERA & SEGARRA, 2008). But the protection provided to the thrips by the deformed leaves probably reduced dramatically the efficiency of this predator. Another species of Anthocoridae is quite abundant in Guadeloupe and represents an efficient predator of the thrips *Gynaikothrips uzeli* (Zimmermann, 1900) (Phlaeothripidae) that causes galls to the leaves of *Ficus benjamina* L. (Moraceae). This predator has not been observed feeding on *H. tabebuia*.

Tabebuia heterophylla damaged by *Holopothrips tabebuia*.

One year after the first record, intensive prospecting showed that *H. tabebuia* is widely distributed in Guadeloupe. It was found in all the localities of Grande-Terre. In Basse-Terre *H. tabebuia* is found only along the coast from the shore to 100 m above the sea level. This territory corresponds to the area of distribution of *T. heterophylla* (FOURNET, 2002). *H. tabebuia* is also present in almost all the small islands surrounding Guadeloupe, in particular in Marie-Galante and the Saintes archipelago (Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas). *H. tabebuia* has not been recorded from La Désirade, but the information

available from this island is quite imprecise and the close proximity of this island to Guadeloupe suggests that *H. tabebuia* could easily invade it.

In Martinique *H. tabebuia* was recorded for the first time on May 23rd 2007 in the locality Anse Céron (district of Le Prêcheur) and is now distributed in the whole island. *H. tabebuia* is widely and abundantly distributed in the northern islands, Les îles du nord, Saint-Bartélémy and Saint-Martin, close to Porto Rico.

The causes of the proliferation of *H. tabebuia* in the Caribbean region are unknown as well as the origin of this thrips. The genus *Holopothrips* encompasses 31 species and seems to be restricted to the Neotropics (MOUND & MARULLO, 1996).

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