



## Incidence of *Lema downsei* Baly (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) on *Asparagus racemosus*

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ABSTRACT: *Lema downsei* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) is recorded as a new pest of *Asparagus racemosus*. © 2010 Association for Advancement of Entomology

KEYWORDS: *Lema downsei*, *Asparagus racemosus*, new record

The chrysomelid beetle, *Lema downsei* Baly is reported to infest wheat (David and Ananthakrishnan, 2006). The occurrence of this beetle was noticed on *Asparagus racemosus* in the herbal garden of the Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research at Boriavi, Anand, Gujarat, India. *A. racemosus* is an under-shrub that climbs up to 1–3 m high, with stout and creeping root stock. It is found in plains to 4000 ft high, in tropical and sub-tropical, dry and deciduous forests and in the Himalayas. The infestation was noticed in February 2009, during regular surveys for insect pests on medicinal plants. Both the adults and grubs in particular were found chewing the tender tips of new shoots and tender foliage which resulted in shallow holes on the shoot and brownish discolouration of the tissues. The affected tender shoots ultimately dried out. On an average 10–12 grubs and 5–6 adults per shoot were recorded whenever there were new shoots. The adults were active throughout the year except during the winter months. They chewed on the foliage in the absence of tender new shoots, causing drying of leaves. Heavy infestation could weaken the plants and reduce the plant's root yield. Other pests reported on *A. racemosus* are grasshoppers, aphids, army worms and a mite but no major damage is observed (Gupta, 2005).

This is the first report of the *Lema downsei* on *A. racemosus* from India.

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