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Notes on Galls Induced by *Daphnephila* (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae) on *Machilus bombycina* (Lauraceae) in Assam, India

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Abstract. Galls induced by *Daphnephila* gall midges on *Machilus bombycina* King ex Hook.f. (= *Percea bombycina* (King ex Hook.f.) Kosterm.) and *Machilus gamblei* King (Lauraceae) were respectively surveyed in Assam and West Bengal, India. On each plant, one leaf and one stem gall were found. The leaf and stem gall inducers on *M. gamblei* have been known as *Daphnephila haasi* Kieffer and *D. glandifex* Kieffer, respectively. However, because shapes of both leaf and stem galls were different between *M. bombycina* and *M. gamblei*, gall inducers associated with *M. bombycina* are probably different species from *D. haasi* and *D. glandifex*. Although the leaf galler on *M. bombycina* was identified as a species of *Asphondylia* in some previous studies, gall midge features as well as gall morphology clearly indicate that the inducer is a member of the genus *Daphnephila*.

Key words: Asphondyliini, gall midge, Muga silk, *Daphnephila haasi*, *Daphnephila glandifex*, *Machilus gamblei*.

Introduction

Daphnephila (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae) is an oriental and eastern Palearctic genus associated with Lauraceae (Tokuda & Yukawa 2007; Gagné & Jaschhof 2021). Kieffer (1905) erected the genus with the following three species distributed in West Bengal, India: *D. haasi* Kieffer, the type species of the genus, induces slender urn-shaped leaf galls on *Machilus gamblei* King; *D. glandifex* Kieffer induces subglobose stem galls on *M. gamblei*; and *D. linderiae* Kieffer, which is only known species associated with plants other than *Machilus*, induces globose leaf galls on *Lindera pulcherrima* Benth. (Kieffer 1905; Mani 2000; Gagné & Jaschhof 2021). The type locality of

these gall midges is vicinity of Kurseong, West Bengal, but type materials are considered to have been lost (Kieffer 1905; Gagné & Jaschhof 2021). After that, *D. machilicola* Yukawa was described from Japan (Yukawa 1974) and six species were from Taiwan (Tokuda *et al.* 2008; Pang *et al.*, 2015). In addition, many undescribed species are still present in East and Southeast Asian countries (Docters van Leeuwen-Reijnvaan & Docters Van Leeuwen 1926; Yukawa 1974; Yang *et al.* 1999; Yang *et al.* 2000; Yukawa *et al.* 2005; Tokuda & Yukawa 2007; Tung & Yang 2018).

In India, a cecidomyiid species inducing leaf galls on som tree *M. bombycina* King ex Hook.f.

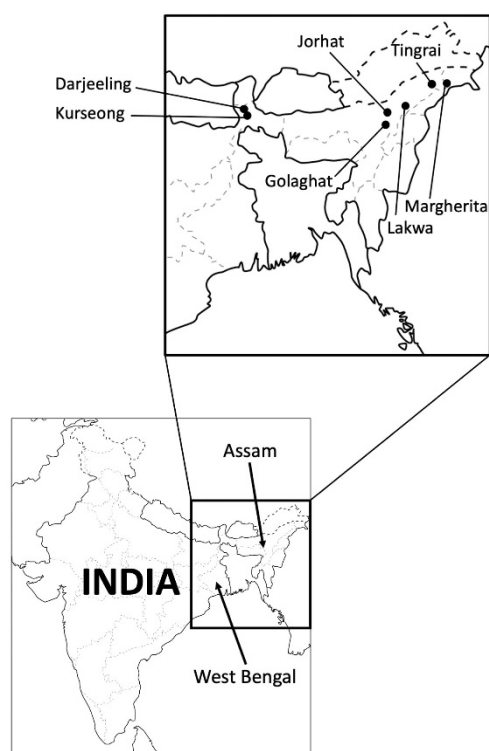


FIGURE 1. Map of census sites in Assam and West Bengal, India.

(= *Percea bombycina* (King ex Hook.f.) Kosterm.) has been identified as *Asphondylia* sp.

(Singh *et al.*, 2013; Baruah, 2020; Sahu *et al.*, 2020) or erroneously as a parasitoid *Ormyrus* sp. (Hymenoptera: Ormyridae) (Gogoi *et al.*, 2013). However, the shape and structure of galls strongly suggest that the gall is induced by a species belonging to *Daphnephila*.

This gall midge is known as a pest of *M. bombycina*, which is a primary host plant of Muga silkworm, *Antheraea assamensis* Helfer (Saturniidae), an endemic and economic silk-producing insect of Assam, North Eastern India (Sahu *et al.* 2020). In this region, the silk production is a major industry (Gogoi *et al.* 2017; Borah & Borgohain 2018) and not only the silkworm *Bombyx mori* L. (Bombycidae), but also several saturniid moths including the Eri silkworm *Samia ricini* (Donovan) (= *Phylosamia ricini*), Muga silkworm *Antheraea assamensis* Helfer (= *A. assama*), and Tassar silkworm *A. paphia* (L.) have been cultivated. Among them, *A. assamensis* feeds on *M. bombycina* and produces golden yellow silk locally known as ‘Muga’ silk (Chakravorty *et al.* 2010; Ahmed *et al.* 2015).

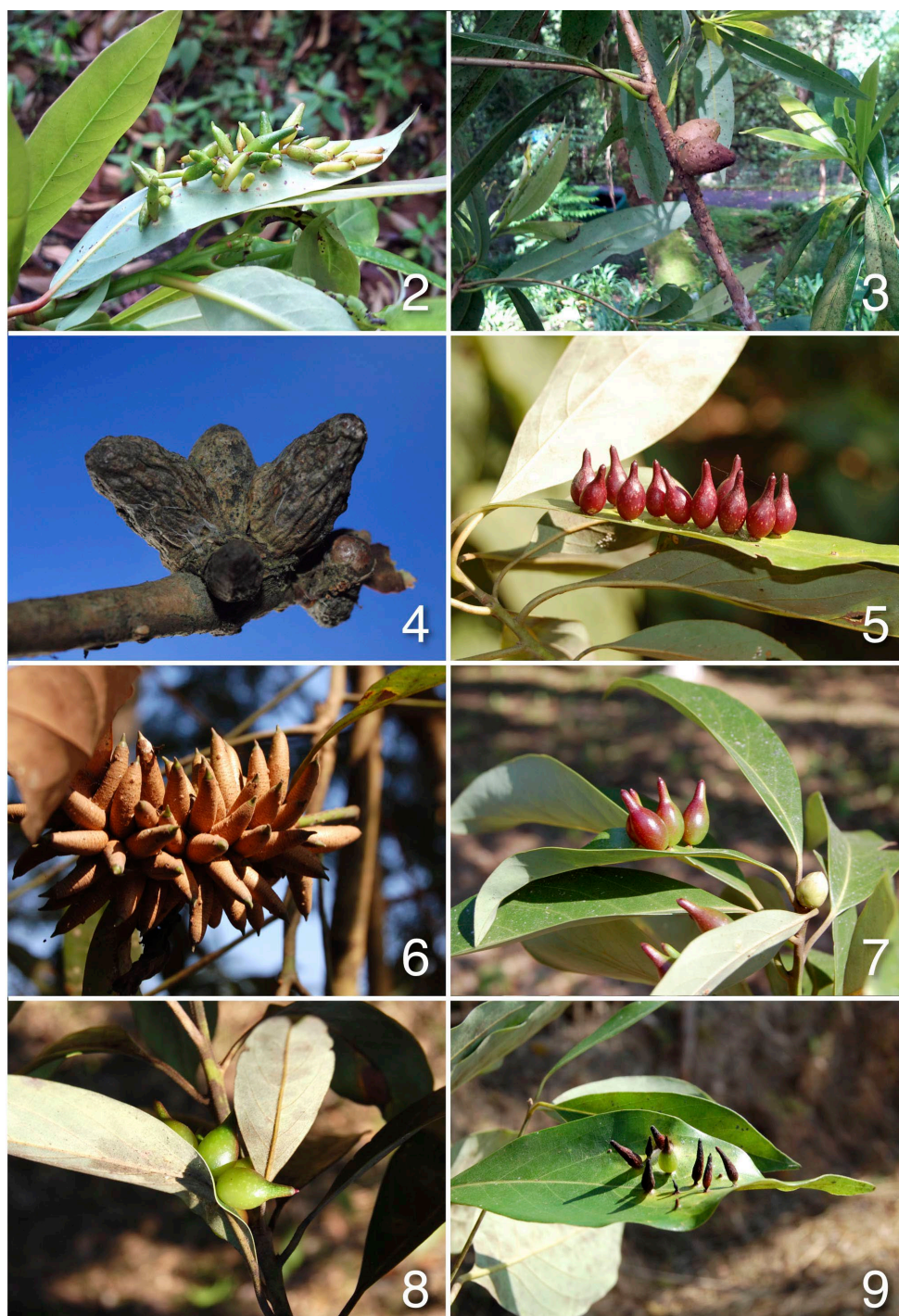
Prior to the species identifications of gall midges associated with *M. bombycina* in Assam, we compared the morphology of galls induced by *Daphnephila* on *M. bombycina* with that of known congeners associated with *M. gamblei* in West Bengal.

TABLE 1 Galls induced by *Daphnephila* species on *Machilus* in West Bengal and Assam, India

| Locality* | Date | Host Plant | Galled position | Investigator** |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| West Bengal | | | | |
| Lloyd’s Botanical Garden, Darjeeling | 27 May 2011 | <i>Machilus gamblei</i> | Stem (incl. old ones) | MT, MB, CS, TI |
| Dowhill Park, Kurseong | 28 May 2011 | <i>M. gamblei</i> | Leaf | MT, MB, CS, TI |
| Assam | | | | |
| NEIST plantation, Jorhat | 9 Jan 2010 | <i>Machilus bombycina</i> | Leaf & Stem | MT, MB, MM, CS, KM, PRB, JY |
| Lakwa plantation, Sivasagar | 10 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf & Stem | MT, MB, MM, CS, KM, PRB, JY |
| Golaghat | 11 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf | MT, MB, MM, CS, KM, PRB, JY |
| Central Eri Muga Res Inst., Jorhat | 12 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf | MT, MB, MM, CS, KM, PRB, JY |
| Assam Agr. Univ., Jorhat | 16 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf | MT, MB |
| Amtolia, Selenghat, Jorhat | 17 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf | MT, MB |
| Matabeel, Margherita, Tinsukia | 20 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf & Stem | MT, MB |
| Tingrai, Tinsukia | 21 Jan 2010 | <i>M. bombycina</i> | Leaf & Stem | MT, MB |

*Abbreviations are as follows; NEIST: North East Institute of Science & Technology.

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FIGURES 2-9. Galls induced by *Daphnephila* gall midges on *Machilus* (Lauraceae) in Assam and West Bengal, India. 2: Leaf galls induced by *D. haasi* on *M. gamblei* in Dowhill Park, Kurseong, West Bengal; 3: Stem galls induced by *D. glandifex* on *M. gamblei* in Lloyd's Botanical Garden, Darjeeling, West Bengal; 4: Old stem galls induced by *D. glandifex* on *M. gamblei* in Lloyd's Botanical Garden; 5: Leaf galls induced by *Daphnephila* sp. on *M. bombycina* in North-East Institute of Science & Technology (NEIST), Jorhat, Assam; 6: Stem galls induced by *Daphnephila* sp. on *M. bombycina* in NEIST; 7-8: Color variations of leaf galls induced by *Daphnephila* sp. on *M. bombycina* in Tingrai, Assam; and 9, leaf galls induced by *Daphnephila* sp. on *M. bombycina* in Tingrai, which have withered probably due to fungal infection.

Methods

Field surveys were conducted from 26 to 29 May 2011 in West Bengal and from 8 to 21 January 2010 in Assam (Fig. 1). In West Bengal, galls induced by *D. haasi* and *D. glandifex* were surveyed. In Assam, galls induced on *M. bombycina* were surveyed in *Machilus* plantations and other *Machilus* growing areas. Materials are managed by MB and kept in North-East Institute of Science & Technology, Jorhat, Assam, India.

Results and Discussion

Throughout the field surveys in West Bengal, we found leaf galls induced by *D. haasi* in Dowhill Park, Kurseong, and stem galls induced by *D. glandifex* in Lloyd's Botanical Garden, Darjeeling (Table 1, Figs 2–3). Although longitudinal wrinkles were illustrated in stem galls induced by *D. glandifex* in a figure of Kieffer (1905), they were not observed in fresh ones. However, such wrinkles were visible on old galls found in the same locality (Fig. 4).

In Assam, leaf and stem galls were found on *M. bombycina* in several localities shown in Table 1 (Figs 5–6). The leaf gall is drop-shaped and thicker than the gall induced by *D. haasi* on *M. gamblei*. The stem gall is subcylindrical and slenderer than the gall induced by *D. glandifex*. The leaf gall found at an *M. bombycina* plantation in North-East Institute of Science & Technology, Jorhat was reddish purple (Fig. 5), but that at natural vegetation was more or less varied, from pale reddish purple to green (Figs 7–8). Notably, the leaf galls found in Assam were produced on the upper surface, unlike other known leaf galls of *Daphnephila*, which are usually induced on the lower leaf surface (Kieffer, 1905; Yukawa, 1974; Tokuda *et al.*, 2008; Pang *et al.*, 2015). This is probably owing to the difference in oviposition behavior of females. Some galls were withered possibly caused by fungal infection (Fig. 9). The stem gall was hard and usually dozens of galls were clustered on a twig, sometimes causing death of apical part of the shoots (Fig. 6). The difference in gall shape suggests that *Daphnephila* species associated with *M. bombycina* are different from *D. haasi* and *D. glandifex*, as in other cases of *Daphnephila* gall midges that are associated with certain host plants and inducing species-specific shapes of gall (Tokuda *et al.*, 2008; Pang

et al. 2015).

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