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**PRECISORITHYA SWINHOEI L.**  
(FAM. NYMPHALIDAE), FEEDING ON  
*STRIGA* Spp.—THE PHANEROGAMIC  
PARASITE OF SUGARCANE AND  
JOWAR

IN 1946 August, one of us (D.V.M.) noticed a number of butterfly caterpillars feeding on *Striga*-Spp.—a root parasite of sugarcane and jowar in this tract. The caterpillars on rearing emerged into butterflies, provisionally identified as "*Precis Orithya Swinhœi*" L., popularly known as "Blue Pansy". During the same period the caterpillars were noticed on *Striga* in some of the sugarcane plots at Rudroor, and later during winter months, at Bodhan and nearby places.

*Striga* Spp.—the root parasite of sugarcane is a fairly serious pest in the Nizamsagar tract and during August 1939, Rai Saheb Prof. L. S. S. Kumar of the Bombay Agricultural Department, visited the area on tour and suggested various remedial measures for the eradication of the pest. In his report<sup>1</sup> he alludes of having noticed a butterfly caterpillar feeding on *Striga densiflora*. It is not known whether it is the caterpillar of *Precis Orithya Swinhœi* L. he is referring to.

The butterfly, though observed all the year round, is abundant only during the winter months. The seasonal distribution is as follows (see Table I).

During the months of December 1948 and January (1949), when rearing was done in the laboratory, its life-history was as follows:

Egg period 4-5 days, Larval period 10-15 days and the Pupal period 10-12 days. The

meteorological data in the laboratory where rearing was done is given in Table II.

TABLE I

Month	Caterpillars collected during field observations about Bodhan	Butterflies noticed
October	22	In few numbers
November	120	In large numbers Flitting during midday & copulating
December	112	Do
January	53	In few numbers
February	12	Do. Observed on <i>Striga</i> in Rabi jowar plots
March	nil	In very few numbers
April	3	In negligible numbers
May-October	Almost nil	In very negligible numbers

TABLE. II

*Average meteorological data of the  
Laboratory where rearing was done*

Month	Maximum Temp.	Minimum Temp.	Humidity
December '48 ..	78.3° F.	72.2° F.	65
January '49 ..	78.9° F.	70.9° F.	66

The eggs of the butterfly are laid singly on tender leaves and buds and the caterpillar feeds on them. However the caterpillar is not a voracious feeder. The effectiveness of the butterfly in reducing infestation of *Striga* is being worked out.

Apart from the above a few more insects on *Striga* have been observed. Investigations will be carried as and when opportunity arises.

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