

Scientific Notes

Concerning Remedies for Chiggers. While in conversation with the late E. F. Erwin, of the Department of Agriculture, concerning remedies for "chiggers" (*Trombidium* spp.) the writer mentioned the value of cattle and even of the passing of many persons in destroying the pests by trampling them. This is printed in the last paragraph of Circular 77, of the Bureau of Entomology, page 66, but where the subject is considered from the standpoint of infestation to a limited tract.

Mr. Erwin stated that when we have to deal with a badly chigger-infested tract of, say 400 acres, he considered cattle inadequate and cited his own experience on such a tract, that after turning sheep into the field that the chiggers were destroyed. Undoubtedly this was largely due to their being trampled to death, and to the sheep keeping the grass more tightly cut than would cattle, but Mr. Erwin also believed that the chiggers ascend the limbs of the sheep and that the oil in the wool is responsible for their demise.

Whatever may be the truth, it is obvious that sheep turned into large tracts of infested land would probably accomplish the eradication of the mites more thoroughly and in a shorter space of time than would perhaps any other domestic animals that might be employed for the purpose with the possible exception of goats.

F. H. CHITTENDEN, Sc.D.,

Bureau of Entomology, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The Colorado Potato Beetle Migrating to the Pacific Coast. Early writers on the distribution of the Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata* Say) were of the opinion that this species would not be able to become disseminated westward of Colorado. In later years we have found that many species become distributed from west to east as well as from east to west. In other words, we cannot lay down "hard and fast rules" in regard to a great many forms of insects. This matter was summed up by the writer in 1907.¹ "As was predicted years ago, the Rocky Mountains have proved an impassable barrier for this species, and the insect had not been able to reach the Pacific Coast or neighboring states west of such barrier." It was, therefore, a considerable surprise to receive specimens of this beetle in somewhat cramped condition, owing to their being tightly pressed, with larva, into a small tin box. The beetles show no particular difference from the typical *L. decemlineata*.

It seems more than probable that this species has made its way so far westward through the agency of man or by what Doctor Howard has termed a "commercial jump," and it may now be expected anywhere west of the Rocky Mountains, since we know of its occurrence in Colorado 8,000 or more feet above sea-level. The specimens were obtained from Sister M. Rose, Order of St. Benedict, Colton, Washington, who kindly furnished them by request.

F. H. CHITTENDEN.

On a Food-habit of *Alabama argillacea*. Mr. Charles Alkire, an orchardist of Keyser, Mineral County, W. Va., reports that the moths of *Alabama argillacea* did serious damage to late peaches in his orchard in the fall of 1911 and again in 1912. He states that the moths punctured the skin of the ripe fruit and fed on the juice, the puncture being very small and not noticeable until the bloom or fuzz was rubbed from the skin. The injured fruit would be normal in appearance until picked, when it would be found to have soft spots about an inch in diameter surrounding the punctures. These rendered it unfit for packing and shipping and even for local use.

¹ Circular No. 87, Bureau of Entomology.

The varieties injured were late clings and the extent of the injury was as great as 75 per cent. Only comparatively few trees were affected for the reason that not many of the late varieties were in bearing at that time. There appears to be no doubt as to the responsibility of the moth in question as Mr. Alkire states that he, personally, has observed the moth at work and that several of his workmen have also seen it. He submitted samples of the moths, so there is no doubt as to the identity of the species.

Spilogale feeding upon Peach-tree borer pupæ. Mr. Alkire also called attention to the value of the common pole-cat (*Spilogale interruptans*) as an insect destroyer. He states that in worming peach trees, especially in August, he has repeatedly found traces of this animal and has seen where it had removed the pupæ of the peach-tree borer from the soil, and that one afternoon he, with several workmen, was worming trees and saw the pole-cat going from tree to tree and searching for the pupæ which it dug out and devoured.

L. M. PEAIRS, *Morgantown, W. Va.*

Occurrence of the Argentine Ant in Texas. On January 5, 1914, the writer visited Beaumont, Texas, and found a heavy infestation by *Iridomyrmex humilis* Mayr. throughout a considerable portion of the business and residential sections of the city. The evidence of citizens interviewed indicates that the insect has been established in this locality for the past five years and the infestation is fully as heavy as at points in Louisiana and Mississippi which have been infested for a similar period.

The occurrence of the ant at this point, on the main line of the Southern Pacific Railway, confirms previous observations to the effect that most rapid dissemination takes place along the lines of heavy railway traffic.

WILMON NEWELL.

College Station, Texas.
January 7, 1914.