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### ***Dasychira mendosa* (Hübner, 1934) (Lep: Lymantriidae); notes on larval foodplants in India**

According to Nair (1986) this well-distributed Lymantrid is a pest of certain important crops in India. He cites millets (*Setaria*), cowpea (*Vigna sinensis*), *Ricinis communis*, banana (*Musa*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), apple (*Malus*), cacao and coffee.

I came across a single fully-grown larva on *Bridelia* underneath a mango tree. This plant is in the same family as *Ricinis*, Euphorbiaceae, so perhaps it was not so surprising that it was feeding on it. The insect "spun up" soon after, an imago, a female, emerging on my return to London in late June 1994. I was able to identify it by comparing it to a specimen in the BM (NH) collection from an example dating back to July 1894 from Karnataka in south-west India.

It was as well that I was able to verify the moth's identity from the imago as Nair gives two completely contradictory descriptions of the larva in his book. One, relating to its association with banana describing the larva thus, "light blueish-brown with reddish-brown spots . . .". Whilst his account of the insect on cacao says, "yellow spots and red stripes on thorax and paired lateral tufts on segments . . .". My find corresponded with neither, it resembled a very large *antiqua*, but that is only an approximate description.

I found the larva in Bombay. *Dasychira mendosa* according to Hampson (1892) ranges from India, through to Sri Lanka and Burma to Java and south-eastwards to Australia.

I would like to thank Mark Coode at Kew Gardens for his assistance in identifying the larval foodplant.

**References:** Hampson, G.F., 1892. *Fauna of British India; Moths*, Vol. 1; Heywood, V.H., 1993. *Flowering Plants of the World*; Nair, M.R.G.K., 1986. *Insects & Mites of Crops in India*.

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