

DO HOST PLANT TRAITS AND GALLING INSECTS AFFECT THE ABUNDANCE OF *ISSUS* SP. ON *COLLIGUAJA ODORIFERA* MOL. ALONG AN ALTITUDINAL GRADIENT?¹

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ABSTRACT

The association between the abundance of the jumping Hemiptera *Issus* sp. and host plant traits (fruits, flowers, buds, plant size and cover) and galling insects in *Colliguaja odorifera* Mol. along altitudinal gradient, was evaluated. Two contrasting sites were studied: low (850 m.a.s.l.) and high (1150 m.a.s.l.). At the low site, the number of fruits and buds, cover and plant size were larger (t-test, $P < 0.05$, for each trait) than in the high site. The number of galling insects and isids was higher in the low site. The ratio of isids to galls was not significantly different in low and high sites. The ratio of fruits to isids was significantly larger in the low site (t-test, $P < 0.05$) than in the high site. Using multivariate approaches in each site, in the low site plant cover was significantly ($F_{2,97} = 4.89$, $P < 0.01$) and positively associated with isid abundance. Whilst at the high site the number of fruits was significantly ($F_{3,36} = 3.18$, $P < 0.05$) and positively associated with isid abundance. Key words: *Colliguaja odorifera*, Issidae abundance, galling insects, altitudinal gradient.

RESUMEN

Se evaluó la asociación entre la abundancia de *Issus* sp. y el número de insectos agalladores y los atributos de la planta hospedera *Colliguaja odorifera* Mol. (frutos, flores, yemas, cobertura y dimensiones de la planta), a lo largo de un gradiente altitudinal. Se estudió dos zonas contrastantes: una baja (850 msnm) y otra alta (1150 msnm). En la zona baja, el número de frutos y yemas, y la cobertura y dimensiones de la planta fueron mayores (t-test, $P < 0.05$ para cada carácter) que en la zona alta. El número de insectos agalladores e ísidos fue mayor en la zona baja. La proporción ísidos/agallas no fue significativamente diferente entre ambos lugares. La proporción frutos/ísidos fue significativamente mayor en la zona baja (t-test, $P < 0.05$) con respecto a la alta. Utilizando regresiones múltiples en cada área, se observó que en la zona baja la cobertura de la planta estuvo asociada significativa ($F_{2,97} = 4.89$, $P < 0.01$) y positivamente con la abundancia de ísidos. Por otro lado, en la zona alta el número de frutos estuvo asociado significativa ($F_{3,36} = 3.18$, $P < 0.05$) y positivamente con la abundancia de ísidos.

Palabras claves: *Colliguaja odorifera*, abundancia de Issidae, insectos formadores de agallas, gradiente altitudinal.

INTRODUCTION

Herbivore-plant interactions may be affected in

time and space by environmental conditions (Crawley, 1986; Thompson, 1988; Price, 1997). In particular, altitudinal range can affect the pattern of host plant distribution and consequently that of its closely related herbivores (Boecklen & Spellenberg, 1990; Aguilar & Boecklen, 1992). The common shrub *Colliguaja odorifera* Mol. shows an altitudinal distribution range between 600 to 1200 meters above sea level, is scarcely attacked by folivorous insects (Montenegro *et al.*, 1980), but strongly attacked by gall makers (Martínez *et al.*, 1992). Work in this system has focused on different aspects of the galling insect-*C. odorifera* relationship, emphasizing the relevance of plant traits such as specificity of attacked organs or plant phenology (Núñez & Sáiz, 1994; Sáiz *et al.*, 1999;

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Martinez *et al.*, 1992), and the influence of altitudinal gradient (Fuentes-Contreras *et al.*, 1999). A common insect found associated to *C. odorifera* is the jumping Hemiptera, *Issus* sp. (Fulgoromorpha: Issidae), but it has been poorly studied. In this work, the pattern of abundance of *Issus* sp. on *C. odorifera* growing at two sites of different altitude was evaluated in relation to plant traits and galling insect abundance.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

C. odorifera occurs at the Río Clarillo National Reserve (33° 51' S- 70° 29' W, 45 km southeast of Santiago, Chile) mostly on equatorial facing slopes. Two sites of different altitude (850 and 1150 m above sea level) were chosen. Modular plants separated by at least 5 m were selected at each site ($n = 100$ in low site, and $n = 40$ in high site). The size of each plant (breadth and length) and approximate area covered by it were recorded. A representative volume (40cm x 40cm x 40cm) of each plant was chosen and the number of fruits, flowers, buds and galls present in this volume was determined. Only the galls corresponding to the last season were considered, i.e. galls which were either completely green or at least green at their base. A

beating trap (0.5m x 0.8 m) was placed under the representative plant volume chosen and the canopy was shaken to collect and determine the number of isids fallen.

For comparisons between low and high sites, a t-test was used for plant traits, herbivore abundance (galling insects and isids), and the ratios of fruits to isids and isids to galls. Multiple regression analyses considering plant traits and galling insects as variables affecting isid abundance, were used for both sampling areas.

RESULTS

At the low site, the number of fruits and buds, and the cover and dimension of the plants were significantly (t-test, $P < 0.005$, for each plant trait evaluated) greater than at the high site. The number of flowers was not significantly different (t-test, $P > 0.1$) between low and high sites (Figure 1).

At the low site, the number of galling insects and isids were significantly higher (t-test, $P < 0.005$, for each herbivore evaluated) than at the high site. Multiple regressions showed that at the low site only the cover of the plant was positively associated ($F_{2,97} = 4.899$, $P < 0.01$) with isid abundance. At the high site, the number of fruits was positively associated

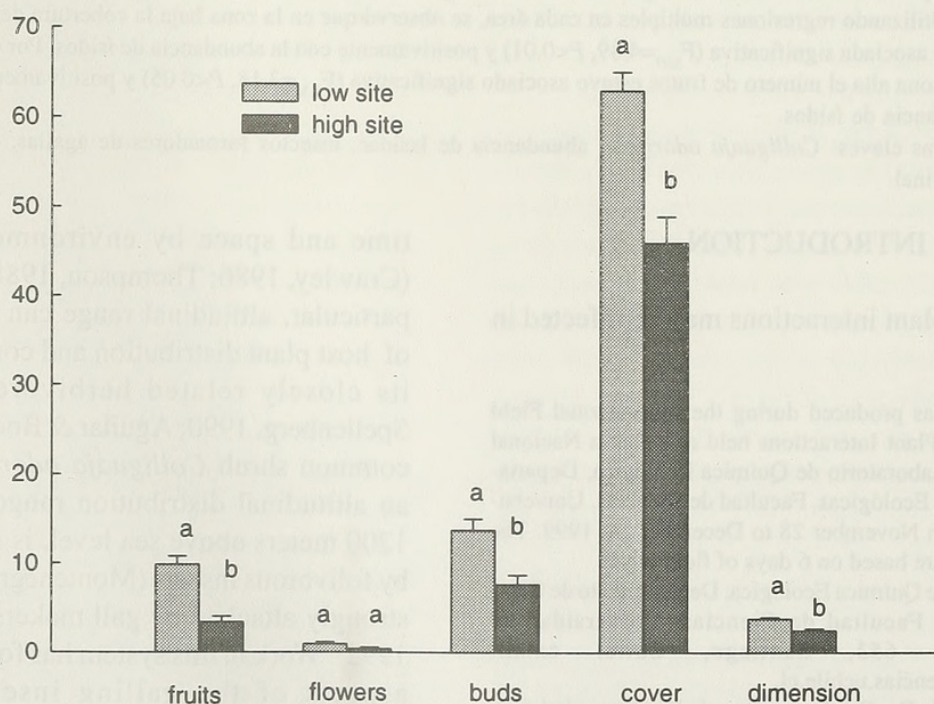


Figura 1. Comparison of plant traits in *Colliguaja odorifera* growing at low and high altitudes. Different letters mean significant differences (t-test, $P < 0.05$). Fruits, flowers and buds are represented as number; cover as percentage of total plant area, and total dimension as square meters.



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