

The insects of "Black Sage" (Cordia macrostachya) in Trinidad

Introduction

In 1942, in a letter to the Colonial Office from the Mauritius Department of Agriculture, it was stated that the weed Cordia interrupta DC., which is synonymous with C. macrostachya (Jacq.) R. & S., had become an "ever increasing menace to pastures and sugar plantations", and a request was made for an investigation into the possibility of its control by the use of the natural insect enemies of the plant in its native habitat.

According to Marshall (1934), the plant known in Trinidad as "Black Sage" is Cordia cylindrostachya R. & S., but this has recently been proved to be a misnomer, as that species is probably confined to Peru. This erroneous synonymy appears to have arisen during the nineteenth century, as the original volume of the Index Kewensis (1895) places C. macrostachya among the synonyms of C. cylindrostachya, and this view is upheld by Stahl (1936). Grisebach (1864), however, omits to mention C. macrostachya, but places de Candolle's species interrupta as a subspecies or variety of Cordia cylindrostachya.

Pulle (1937) does not mention C. cylindrostachya among the plants of Surinam, and gives C. interrupta as being synonymous with C. macrostachya. Recent research on this subject by the staff of the Kew Herbarium, by whom C. cylindrostachya is now regarded as a distinct species, confirms this synonymy, and refers the Trinidad species to C. macrostachya.