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Host plant preferences of lac insect in North East India

K. I. Singh, Ng. Rustam, S. M. Haldhar, L. Boby, Kh. Bobi, K. Linda and Ch. Niranjan

*Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University, Iroisemba, Imphal,
Manipur-795004*

Corresponding author email: rustam.ngangom@gmail.com

Lac insect, a homopterous sucking beneficial insect of which females secrete lac prefers a wide range of hosts prevailing in different agro climatic regions of the country. However, lac insect of this north eastern region *Kerria chinensis*/*Kerria manipurensis* fed only few hosts inspite of its wide availability. A thorough survey of natural populations of lac insect in the entire region, study and cultivation of lac insect and its host plants was conducted at the Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University, Imphal since December, 2014 to analyse the differences of the genus and its preferences. The lac insect of natural populations in this region shows some peculiar nature that although different hosts available in the area it prefers only *Ficus religiosa*, *Ficus recemosa*, *Ficus benghalensis*, *Malvaviscus penduliflorus*, Ber, *Cajanus cajan*, *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Mallotus philippensis* and *Litchi chinensis* in Manipur; *Ficus sp.* only in Meghalaya; *Malvaviscus penduliflorus* in Sikkim; *Litchi chinensis* only in Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh; Litchi and Indian iron chestwood tree (*Mesua ferrea*) in Nagaland and the occurrence of lac insect was nil and no evidence of live or dead insect was observed in the state of Tripura although its wide availability of its host in so far survey and study conducted. *Ficus* and *Malvaviscus penduliflorus* are the most productive hosts in Manipur; Litchi in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram and *Ficus* in Meghalaya.

Keywords: Lac insect, *Kerria chinensis*, Hosts, *Ficus*, Ber, *Cajanus cajan*, *Acacia*, Litchi, *Mesua ferrea*, *Mallotus philippensis*

