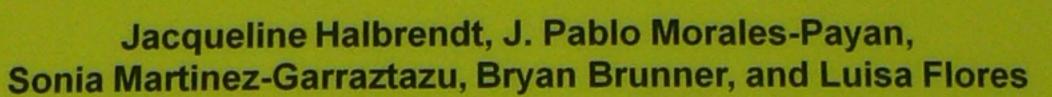
CFCS 2010 ► CP-22



PESTS IN ORGANICALLY-MANAGED Crotalaria juncea IN WESTERN PUERTO RICO





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INTRODUCTION

In Puerto Rico there is increasing interest in the use Crotalaria juncea as a cover crop for soil improvement, weed and nematode suppression, and seed production. As more area is sown with Crotalaria juncea, pests start to appear in this leguminous plant in relatively large abundance.

The objective of this poster is to report the most commonly found pests in organically-managed Crotalaria juncea in experimental plots Lajas and Isabela, Puerto Rico, in the years 2008 and 2009.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During 2008 and 2009, in the Ag Experiment Station of the UPR-Mayaguez, frequent pest scouting was conducted in plots of Crotalaria juncea where experiments of accession evaluation, production practices, and seed multiplication were being conducted. Frequently observed pests were captured and identified.

RESULTS

Iguana iguana, Diabrotica balteata, Cerotoma spp., Utetheisa ornatrix, and U. bella were the pests more commonly found in Crotalaria juncea in western Puerto Rico in 2008 and 2009 (Table 1).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Iguana iguana, Diabrotica balteata, Cerotoma spp., Utetheisa ornatrix, and U. bella were the most abundant pests found in the study.

Our findings indicate management of Utetheisa warrants immediate research in C. juncea for seed production.

Table 1. Common pests in Crotalaria juncea in western Puerto Rico, 2008-2009.



Iguana iguana

In Lajas, during the first four weeks after plant emergence, green iguanas (Iguana iguana) were found eating the tops of plants in the external rows of the plots, Iguanas seemed to prefer eating from the accessions 'Tropic Sunn' and 'São Paulo' as compared to other accessions growing in the same location.



Diabrotica balteata¹ and Cerotoma² spp

In Lajas and Isabela, these beetles were found eating the leaves of plants of all ages. Attacks were more intense before the flowering stage. Beetles were effectively managed with neem extracts and Ecotrol®.





Utetheisa bella and U. ornatrix

During the reproductive stage of C. juncea, heavy infestations of the pod borers Utetheisa bella and U. ornatrix were found in both Isabela and Lajas. Young larva of Utetheisa fed on leaves, and later perforated the pods and ate the developing seeds of C. juncea. Unchecked attack of Utetheisa caused an estimated average seed yield loss of 50%.

This research is part of UPR-Mayaguez Ag Exp Station Project Z-208, funded by SARE-Southern Region