

REVIEWS

ATLAS OF INSECTS HARMFUL TO FOREST TREES. Vol. I
Vladimir Novak, Ferdinand Hrozinka and Bohumil Stary.
125 pp. Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co. (Netherlands) and
SZN State Agricultural Publishing House (Czechoslovakia).
1976. Price US\$32.75.

This book deals with 105 species of European forest insects. Most species are dealt with on a single page, about half of which is text and the remainder figures. The figures generally include the adults, larvae and damage and are all beautifully drawn although in many cases somewhat stylised. The sole use of art work to illustrate a book intended primarily for insect identification is, in my opinion, difficult to justify. The present quality of photographic reproduction is such that in both colour and detail it equals or surpasses artistic impressions and has the added advantage of accurately reproducing an individual specimen. A single bad drawing in this style of book can destroy confidence in the accuracy of all plates.

Although no mention is made anywhere in the book, the text is obviously a rather poor translation, probably from Czechoslovakian. Incorrect word translation occurs in several places (elbowed antennae appears as broken antennae) but the most common fault is obscure, and sometimes nonsensical, sentence construction, together with such undefined terms as "technical pest" and "physiological pest".

Conflict between the figures and their accompanying text is common in both coloration and fact. For example, on page 16 the larval legs are described as jet black but are shown as yellow-brown and dark green; on page 18 the female's antennae are described as nearly as long as the body, but are drawn less than 2/3 this length; on page 65 the number of eggs is given as 4-7 and shown as 11; and on the same page larvae are said not to eat the needle midrib while the drawing shows the contrary.

Errors in fact abound. The siricids *Urocerus gigas* and *Paururus juvencus* are said to attack pines in New Zealand (they are not present in this country), gypsy moth is said to occur throughout the United States (it is confined to parts of about 8 north-eastern states), *Tetropium castaneum* is said to primarily attack spruce (it primarily attacks pine), *Hylotrupes bajulus* is said to commonly lay 200 to 400 eggs, have a larva with few setae, and have the exithole cut by the larva (30 to 100 eggs are commonly laid, the larva has numerous setae, and the adult cuts the exithole), *Platypus*

cylindrus is repeatedly referred to as a bark beetle (it is not). There are numerous other examples.

The author goes to some length in his introduction to point out the care taken with the nomenclature; unfortunately, his *Paururus juvencus* has long been changed to *Sirex juvencus* and *Lymantria dispar* to *Porthetria dispar*.

The grouping of insects according to their host trees confuses the status of the many polyphagous species, especially where little information is included on host range. The information contained within the text for each species is extremely variable, in some cases no distribution or host range is given while in others these aspects are given in considerable detail.

The book has severe limitations as a guide to identification, and is of even less use as a source of biological information on these species.

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