

**First Record of a Pterophorid Moth, *Merrifieldia tridactyla*,  
Causing Damage to Long Guard Fruits *Cucurbita moschata*  
(Cucurbitaceae) in Saudi Arabia**

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Arenberger [1] reported 13 species of pterophorid moths from Saudi Arabia, but nothing on their host plants or damage has been published. The most common species found in Arabia is *Emmelina monodactyla* [2].

The long guord fruits *Cucurbita moschata* (Cucurbitaceae) in Derab, Diriyah and Al-Qatif were attacked by a small pterophorid larva identified as *Merrifieldia tridactyla*.

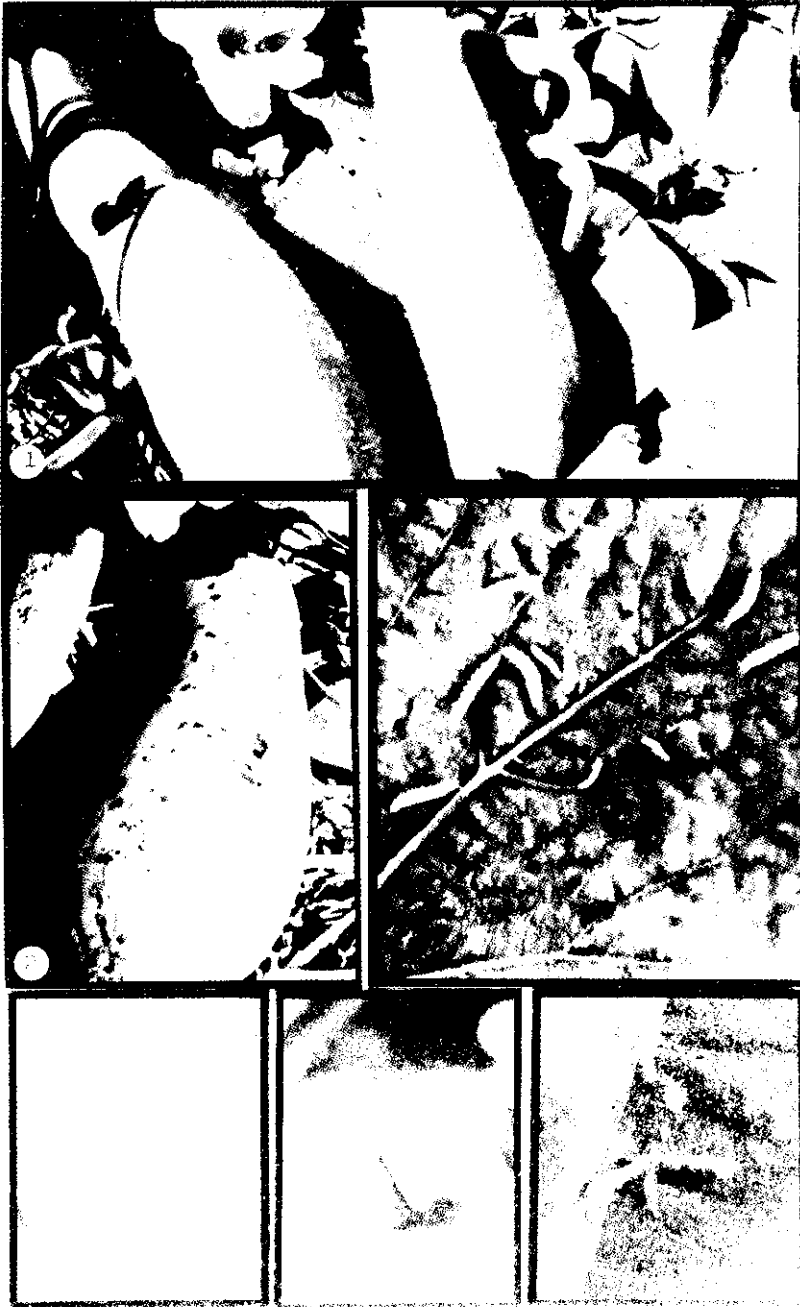
The moths are small, slender, brownish and have the wings split into three feather like divisions. When at rest, the front of hind wings are folded close together and are horizontally at right angles to the body.

Our field observations have shown that the moths were active in Derab and Al-Diriyah during September, October and November. Eggs are laid on the upper surface of the leaves and the newly hatched larvae move actively towards the fruits. Young larvae nibble the fruit skin leaving behind small unglular brown areas. Older larvae gnaws large areas in the fruit causing its discoloration and surface dryness. Pupation usually takes place on the upper leaf-surface.

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### References

- [1] Arenberger, E. "Contribution to the Distribution of the Pterophoridae in Saudi Arabia." In: *Fauna of Saudi Arabia*, 7 (1985), 165-171.
- [2] Walker, D.H. and Pitaway, A.R. *Insects of Eastern Arabia*. Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1987.



1. Healthy fruit; 2. Damaged fruit; 3. larvae; 4., 5. Early and late pupa; 6. Adult moth.

التسجيل الأول لحشرة *Merrifieldia tridactyla* L. على نبات اليقطين في منطقة  
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ملخص البحث . شوهدت أعراض إصابة على نبات اليقطين *Cucurbita moschata* من الفصيلة القرعية في مناطق الدرعية وديراب والقظيف على شكل تآكل وجفاف في سطح الثمار نتيجة الإصابة بفراشة من فصيلة Pterophoridae رتبة حرشفية الأجنحة، أمكن تعريفها بقسم بحوث تعريف الحشرات بمعهد بحوث وقاية النبات بمصر إلى النوع *Merrifieldia tridactyla* L. . ويعتبر هذا هو التسجيل الأول لهذه الحشرة بالمملكة العربية السعودية.