

Beetles in Lumber at Port Castries



By Hannah Dupal-Romain

When a consignment of lumber which arrived at Port Castries on May 16, 2010 was being off loaded, the presence of what seemed to have been some “strange” insects drew much attention among the workers. The consignment was on the Motor Vessel (MV) Thor Leader, and consisted of bundles of Caribbean Pine (*Pinus caribaea*) which originated from Honduras, Central America.

A preliminary assessment conducted by the Plant Quarantine Officers revealed that a high population of the insect was present among the cargo and it appeared to be of a species belonging to the beetle family. As a primary precautionary measure, the consignment was quarantined and samples of the insect were collected for further investigation.

At the Crop Protection Laboratory, with the assistance of Mr. Guy Mathurin, Entomologist & Plant Health Consultant, the insect was examined and tentatively identified to the family level. It was tentatively identified as a beetle species belonging to the Family Lathridiidae or the “Minute Brown Scavenger Beetles”. The family Lathridiidae are reported to be mainly “fungus-feeders” and found mainly on moldy items, stored products and sometimes found on flowers (Borror, Triplehorn & Johnson, 2000). These beetles are also reported to have been found on stored wood in international trade. They

may thrive anywhere there is moisture and poor ventilation which permits the development of molds. The lathridiids are elongate, oval, reddish brown beetles, somewhat flattened, and can range from 1-3 mm in length. The little brown beetle as it is commonly known, feeds on fungi. As moisture becomes adequate, they can reproduce in huge numbers.

For definitive identification, specimens of the beetles were sent to Dr. Bob Woodruff, an Entomologist at the Bureau of Entomology, Florida Department of Agriculture, Gainesville, Florida, USA. Digital images of the insect were also sent via email to Dr. Mike Ivie, a Coleopterist at the Montana State University, USA. The reports received from both Dr. Woodruff and Dr. Ivie confirmed that the insect was indeed the “Minute Brown Scavenger Beetle” belonging to the Family Lathridiidae.

Although the beetles identified did not pose a plant or human health risk, the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF) recommended that the consignment of lumber be returned as it is unacceptable that consignments of plant material or plant products arrive in Saint Lucia with live insects. Presently, the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries or the Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority do not have the facilities or the capability to conduct a fumigation of the cargo hold of ships.

STAFF SPIRITUAL CORNER

From Dirt to Gold

A certain man complained to me about how certain people were making him feel like dirt. He said they always treated him like soil under their feet. As he spoke I started thinking – hmmm some of the most precious and valuable things come from the soil. Silver comes from the soil, gold and diamonds come from the soil, platinum comes from the soil, oil comes from the soil, food also comes from the soil. Then it was revealed to me like a bright light from heaven. Sometimes God makes diamonds out of us and we complain. Don't worry about it, God is making gold out of you. You are very valuable. Don't worry about what they say. You are marvellously and wonderfully made. God loves you. Never let people use your past to determine your future. You can change your destiny into greatness. Remember, with God all things are possible.

It is not our purpose to become each other;
it is to recognize each other, to learn to
see each other and honor him for what he is.

Herman Hesse

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

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Courage is simply
the willingness
to be afraid

and act anyway.

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