

Polymorphism in southern green stink bug, *Nezara viridula* (L.) (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae)

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Stink bugs, which belong to family Pentatomidae, are well-known for the obnoxious odour produced by the scent glands located on the metasternum. Many of them are polyphagous pests of agricultural crops belonging to various families especially Fabaceae. Among the several pentatomid pests of legume crops, the green stink bug, *Nezara viridula* (L.) is perhaps the most important. It is cosmopolitan and highly polyphagous, feeding on plant species in more than 30 families (Panizzi, 1997). In one of the earliest works on the Indian fauna of Pentatomoidea by Distant (Distant, 1902) in the monumental fauna of British India Series, he mentioned the occurrence of two varieties, viz., var.a and var.b in addition to the common green type. However there was no mention of names of the varieties and also he treated the common green type as *N. viridula* (L.). Later on Freeman (Freeman, 1940) gave an account of the genus *Nezara* Amyot & Serville, in which he clearly mentioned the common green form must receive the status of variety by the law of priority. Yukawa and Kiritani (1965) studied the polymorphism in the southern green stink bug from various geographical regions in world. They reported nine forms including the fundamental forms such as G, O, F and R. Even though Indian species of *Nezara* Amyot & Serville was studied by Azim and Shafee (1978), the polymorphic forms of the species, *N. viridula* (L.) was not mentioned.

As many as ten different colour'morphs which are derived from four basic types have been reported from neotropical region (Vivan and Panizzi, 2002). This paper deals with the three colour forms of *N. viridula* (L.) and helps to avoid the mistake of considering this colourmorphs altogether a new species of *Nezara*, as these are common in many natural agro ecosystems. In nature, it was also observed the mating between the various colourmorphs.

Collection of pentatomids was made by sweep net method from various ecosystems covering almost all districts of Karnataka. Besides this, specimens were procured on loan from various agricultural institutions. Collected specimens were killed using ethyl acetate; bugs of smaller size were mounted singly on triangular card points on the right hand side of the thorax by using Fevicol®. Large bugs were directly pinned through scutellum slightly towards right side of the midline, without spreading the wings. The data label with information regarding locality, date of collection, host plants and name of the collector was transfixed separately to the respective specimen. Older specimens were repinned and relabeled whenever necessary.

The diagnostic characters of the genus *Nezara* Amyot and Serville and the three morphs of *Nezara viridula* (L.) are discussed here.