

Lycaenids of the genus *Strymon* as herbivores on inflorescences of two *Aechmea* species (Bromeliaceae) and their parasites

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Introduction

The butterfly genus *Strymon* Hübner (Lycaenidae) contains several species whose larvae feed on bromeliads (e.g. genera *Aechmea*, *Tillandsia*, *Ananas*). Therefore they are considered as potential pests of commercial pineapple. We report new bromeliad host plant records for two *Strymon* species as well as a case of parasitism on one of those species.

Methods

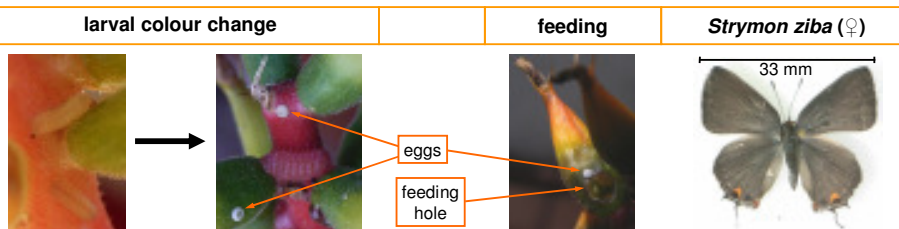
- Study period: October 2006 to December 2007.
- Study site: secondary forest in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, southern Brazil.
- Collection of 11 bromeliads in the field (9 plants of *Aechmea nudicaulis*, 2 of *A. lindenii*).
- Observation of butterfly development in the laboratory.



Results

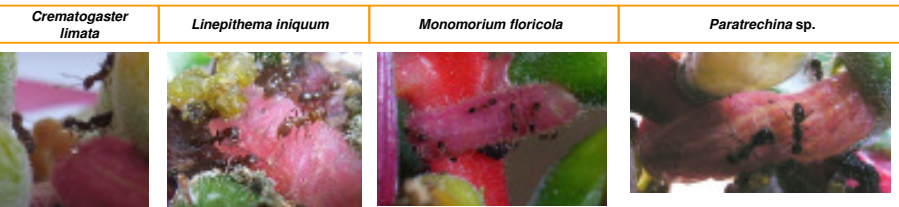
Strymon ziba at *Aechmea nudicaulis*

- One to four caterpillars per inflorescence.
- Larvae changed colour from white to pink.
- Larvae gnawed a hole into the bases of withered flowers or fruits and ate reproductive parts.
- Development: egg ≈ 4-5 days; larval stage ≈ 14-15 days; pupal stage 8-10 days.
- Imagines emerged between mid November until end of January, fitting to the flowering/fruitlet period of *A. nudicaulis*.



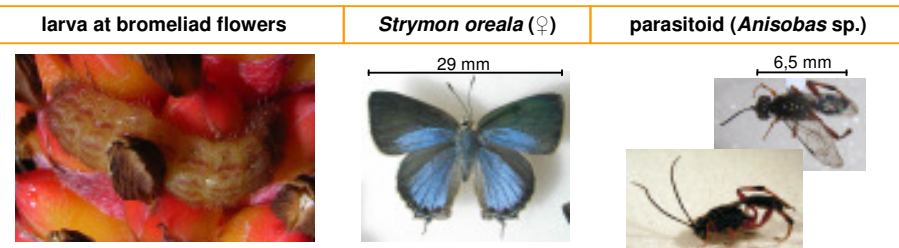
Ant species associated to *S. ziba* larvae

- Four ant species were occasionally observed attending the caterpillars.
- The ants took up small droplets secreted by the caterpillars at their posterior dorsal body surface.
- Some larvae appeared not to be attended at all.



Another *Strymon* sp. at *A. lindenii*

- Out of numerous examined *A. lindenii* plants only two were infested with *Strymon* caterpillars.
- The single imago that emerged 24.09.2007 was preliminarily identified as a female of *Strymon oreala*.
- The other larva was parasitized by the ichneumonid wasp *Anisobas* sp.



Conclusions

- *Aechmea nudicaulis* and *A. lindenii* are new host plant records for two *Strymon* species.
- The *Strymon* larvae eat fruits and are facultatively associated to various ant species.
- At least one of the *Strymon* species is subject to parasitism by an ichneumonid wasp.

Acknowledgements

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