

**Letter to the editor**

**NEW HOST OF *Composia fidelissima* HERRICH-SCHÄFFER  
(LEPIDOPTERA: PERICOPIDAE) IN CUBA**

The Pericopidae is an american family of moths that includes the subfamily Pericopinae, small group of some 300 species; it has only been found in the New World and is almost exclusively tropical.

*Composia fidelissima* Herrich-Schäffer was collected in Cuba and notified by Herrich-Schäffer at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is relatively common in the Keys and its presence was reported in southern United States, Central and South America to Uruguay, Bahamas and Cayman Islands by Harrison in 1896. This butterfly was also found in Belize and Paradise Beach, México, in the 1970's and it was notified in the Dominican Republic by Farrell and Guerrero in 2002. Larvae have frequently been found on the vines of *Echites umbellate* Jacq. at Palm Beach, Florida, and they have been observed feeding on *Nerium oleander* L., *Cynanchum scoparium* Nutt. and *Canavalia rosea* (SW.) DC in the Antilles.

In Cuba, the presence of this butterfly was abundant in the western region and it was also detected by Alayo and Hernandez near the coast of Habana and Matanzas provinces in 1987. The caterpillar has been found on *Echites* P. Browne and *Cameraria* Baill., and there is not any report mentioning other host in our conditions. Recently, samples collected in the golf fields of Varadero in Matanzas province, showed the presence of *C. fidelissima* caterpillar on leaves and stems of Tifdwarf and Bermuda 328, varieties of *Cynodon dactylon* L. known as Bermuda grass; larvae caused severe defoliation on turfgrass. For this reason, it constitutes a new host for this caterpillar species in Cuba.

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