

SOME ASPECTS OF THE BIOLOGY OF PIEROMA PLAGIOPHLEPS
HAMPSON (LEPIDOPTERA: PSYCHIDAE), A DEFOLIATOR OF
DELONIX REGIA (BOJ) (LEGUMINOSAE: CAESALPINIACEAE).

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Delonix regia, commonly known as flamboyant is native to Madagascar and has been introduced to Sri Lanka as an ornamental tree. It is subject to defoliation by a case-bearer whose identity and biology had not been previously recorded in this country. This insect has now been identified as Pieroma plagiophleps Hampson. The adult male is a typical moth; it is black in colour, has bipectinate antennae and a wing span of 12 - 13 mm. The adult female, in contrast is a wingless, apodous creature which does not leave its pupal cocoon; it measures 3 - 4 mm in length. Longevity of both males and females was 2 - 3 days under laboratory conditions. The mean fecundity was 121.9_±20.9 eggs, fertilized eggs produced females and unfertilized ones, males. The incubation period was 3 - 5 days. Larvae hatched within the pupal cocoons. There are five larval instars. The larval period ranged from 39 - 47 days and the pupal period was 12 - 15 days.

Five species of hymenopteran parasitoids were reared from larval and pupal cases. The predaceous and Deopophila smaragdina and the purple sunbird Cinnyris asiatica asiatica were found to prey on this case-bearer.