



Evaluation of Life Cycle of Gram Pod Borer *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hubner) on Vegetable Pea

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/IJPSS/2023/v35i224185

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/109492>

Original Research Article

Received: 29/09/2023

Accepted: 04/12/2023

Published: 07/12/2023

ABSTRACT

Pulse crops are faced with a major biotic constraint globally, and they are attacked by *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner) (Noctuidae), also known as the pod borer, across various regions including Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, and South America. It is widely recognized as a key agricultural pest. Study of their life cycle revealed that total larval period were recorded (20.00±3.21) days from

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1st instar to 6th instar under laboratory conditions at 26°C with 65 % relative humidity revealed. The mean duration was (2.66±0.33), (2.66± 0.33), (2.33± 0.33), (3.66± 0.88), (4.33± 0.66), and (4.33±0.88) days of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th larval instar respectively during April-May 2022. The average incubation period of egg ranged from (4.66±0.88) days. The pod borer passes through six larval instars to become an adult.

Keywords: Pea pod borer; life Cycle; *Helicoverpa armigera*; control condition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Peas, which are grown virtually worldwide for their edible seeds, can be bought fresh, canned, or frozen, and dried peas are commonly used in soups. Edible pods are produced by some varieties, such as sugar peas and snow peas, and they are eaten raw or cooked like green beans, particularly in East Asian cuisines. The plants are relatively easy to grow, and the seeds are a good source of protein and dietary fiber [1]. Pea pods have high nutritive value for human consumption and contain 7.2% carbohydrate, 19.2% mineral matters, 80% phosphorus, and 1.8% iron in fresh pea. In dried pea, they contain 19.7% protein, 56.6% carbohydrate, 2.1% mineral matters, and 4.4% iron [2-6]. Pea is an important vegetable grown all over the country and serves as an off-season vegetable and a significant source of income for farmers. During the growth period, pea plants are susceptible to attacks from a variety of insect pests [7-10]. The major insect pests of peas, such as *Helicoverpa armigera* from the order Lepidoptera and family Noctuidae, are known to be polyphagous in nature [11-14]. The pod borer is responsible for causing up to 90% damage in peas, as it regularly occurs from vegetative growth to pod formation. It has been observed that the pod borer feeds on 300 species belonging to 68 plant families worldwide [15-18]. These pests are highly destructive and can significantly reduce crop yield and economic value. They cause severe damage to both the crop and the field, resulting in decreased yield and quality of peas [19-21]. The larva, particularly in its second instar stage, poses a significant threat as a single larva can destroy multiple fruits by creating borers. The months of March to June are particularly prone to higher chances of damage.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The biology of *Helicoverpa armigera* were carried out under lab conditions in year 2021-2022 at Department of Entomology as well as in Plant Protection Laboratory, College of Horticulture, Bharsar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand. The

standing crop was carefully scanned, and *Helicoverpa armigera* was identified as one of the serious pests. The eggs were collected from the crop fields and were incubated in petri dishes under lab conditions. The newly hatched larvae were then transferred to other petri dishes lined with moist filter paper and provided with fresh pea pods. The filter paper and food were changed every second day. The larva was observed daily, and data was recorded regarding the moulting, duration, and size of each larval instar. The life stages were observed and recorded. The incubation period was measured as the time between egg laying and the emergence of the first instar larva from the egg.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biology of *H. Armigeraw* was studied on vegetable pea under laboratory condition during April-May. The description of various stages namely egg, larval instar, pupa and adult are detailed as under. The freshly laid eggs were collected from the Vegetable Research and Demonstration Block Department of Vegetable Science, College of Horticulture, VCSG UHF, Bharsar. The experiment on biology of vegetable pea pod borer (*H.armigera*) was conducted at laboratory of Entomology, College of Horticulture.

Incubation Period (in Days): The eggs were laid by the female in masses on various parts of the plants and on the upper and lower sides of the pea leaves. The eggs are commonly laid singly and in close proximity to each other. The freshly laid eggs had a spherical shape and a creamy white color with a ribbed surface. Just before hatching, the color of the eggs turned dark brown. During hatching, the egg shell opened at one end, leaving a cap-like flap loosely attached to it. The average incubation period of the eggs ranged from (4.66±0.88) days during April-May. The larval instar molted five times to reach maturity. The newly hatched larva was bright orange with red eyes. As it developed, the color changed to reddish brown, and just before molting, it turned red. The incubation period ranged from 3-6 days, with an average of

(4.66±0.88) days. The results of our experiments are consistent with the studies conducted by Chakarvarty et al. [22], who also reported an incubation period ranging from 3.26±0.15 days.

Larval Stage: During the *Zaid* season in the hills, the first instar lasted for (2.66±0.33) days. Table 1 represents the duration. The second instar lasted for (2.66±0.33) days, and it had a reddish-brown color with dark brown hair and scarlet red eyes. The third instar had a pale brown color with blackish markings on the abdomen. The fourth instar had a greenish-yellow color with narrow dark bands on the back. It lasted for about (3.66±0.88) days. The body color of the fifth instar larva was similar to that of the fourth instar larvae. The head had a reddish-yellow or light brown color. This instar lasted for about (4.33±0.66) days. The fully grown sixth instar larva had a greenish color with dark broken grey lines along the side of the body. These lines varied in width and intensity of color. The color of the larvae could vary, including green, straw-colored, yellow, reddish-brown, or black. The head was greenish yellow. On each segment, there were a number of inconspicuous tubercles from which short hairs arose. The sixth instar lasted for about (4.33±0.88) days. The total larval period, from the first instar to the end of the sixth instar, lasted for (20.00±3.21) days, and the total pupal period ranged from (14.00±0.57) days. The duration of the 1st instar was found to last for 2-3 days, with an average of (2.66±0.33) days, under laboratory conditions. Similarly, the 2nd instar

lasted for 2-3 days, with an average of (2.66±0.33) days. The 3rd instar had a duration of 2-3 days, with an average of (2.33±0.33) days. The 4th instar lasted for 2-5 days, with an average of (3.66±0.88) days. The 5th instar had a duration of 3-6 days, with an average of (4.33±0.66) days. Finally, the 6th instar lasted for 3-5 days, with an average of (4.33±0.88) days. The total larval period, from the birth of the first instar to the end of the sixth instar, lasted for 14-25 days, with an average of (20.00±3.21) days. Our results are comparable to those reported by Chauhan et al. [23], who found a total larval period of the pod borer to be 17-22 days, with an average of 19.20±1.29 days. Baikar et al. [24] also reported an average larval period of 19-25 days.

Total Pre Pupal and Pupal Period (days): The total pre-pupal period was found to last for 1-3 days, with an average of (2.22±0.66) days. Similarly, the total pupal period ranged from 13-15 days, with an average of (14.00±0.57) days. These results align with the studies conducted by Nasreen and Mustafa [25], who observed that the total pre-pupal and pupal period under lab conditions varied from 1-4 days and 14-17 days, with an average of 2.1±0.158 and 15.4±0.50 days, respectively.

Adult Longevity: The adults of *H. armigera* exhibited a wide range of color and markings. The color of the adult varied from buff to brown, with a dark brown circular spot located halfway

Table 1. Duration of life cycle of *Helicoverpa armigera* on vegetable pea crop in *Zaid* season in hills

S.NO	STAGES	DURATION (Days)	MEAN ±SE(m)
01	Incubation period	3.0-6.0	4.66±0.88
02	Larval period		
(A)	1 ST instar	2.0-3.0	2.66±0.33
(B)	2 nd instar	2.0-3.0	2.66±0.33
(C)	3 rd instar	2.0-3.0	2.33±0.33
(D)	4 th instar	2.0-5.0	3.66±0.88
(E)	5 th instar	3.0-5.0	4.33±0.66
(F)	6 th instar	3.0-6.0	4.33±0.88
03	Total larval period	14-25	20.33±3.21
04	Pre –pupal period	1.0-3.0	2.33±0.66
05	Pupal period	13-15	14.00±0.57
06	Adults		
(A)	Male	39-48	44.00±2.64
(B)	Female	43-49	46.33±1.76
07	Total developmental period	31-49	41.33±5.36
	SE(d)	-	2.13
	C.D(0.05)	-	4.44

between the base and apex of the forewings, as well as a smaller spot near the base. The hind wings displayed white coloration with some dark spots, along with well-defined veins and a dark margin containing two lighter spots. The freshly emerged male moth had a deep olive-buff forewing with a dark brown spot, while the female adult had a reddish-brown forewing with a blackish-brown spot. The abdomen shape of the female moth was broad, while the male moth had a pointed abdomen. The male could be distinguished from the female by its smaller size. The female had a longer lifespan, ranging from (46.33±1.76) days, while the male had a lifespan ranging from (44.00±2.64) days. Our results align with the findings of Chauhan et al. [3], who reported a total lifespan of 46.33±1.76 days for females and 44.00±2.64 days for males of *H. armigera*.

Total Developmental Period: Total developmental period range from 31-49 days with an average of 41.33± 5.36 days. Chakarvarty et al. [2] also reported the total life span of male and female adult in 39-48 days and 42-51 days respectively with an average of 45.64±1.49 and 48.76±1.56 days respectively.

4. CONCLUSION

The information generated out of this investigation are summarized and concluded as follows. The incubation period of egg ranged from (4.66±0.88) days during (April- May). The pod borer passes through six larval instars to become an adult. The mean duration was (2.66±0.33), (3.00± 0.57), (2.33± 0.33), (3.66± 0.88), (4.66± 0.88), and (4.00±0.57) days for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th larval instar respectively during April-May 2022. Total larval period was considered from birth of 1st instar to the end of 6th instar. The duration from birth of total larval period lasted for (20.33±3.48) days. Total pre pupal period last for (2.33±0.66) days. Total pupal period range for (21.33±0.88) days. The adults of *H. armigera* can have such a wide range of colors and markings. From buff to brown, with that dark brown circular spot in the middle of the forewings and a smaller spot near the base. And those hind wings with their strongly marked veins and that dark margin with two lighter spots on it. The female lived longer with ranged between (46.33±1.76) days and longevity of male ranged between (44.00±2.64) days. The period from egg to adult emergence is known to be total development period. Developmental period from egg deposition to adult emergence ranges from (25.00±4.35) days.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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