

Recent introductions of parasites of *Saissetia oleae* (OLIV.) in Italy.

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After the introductions of *Metaphycus helvolutus* (COMPERE) (VIGGIANI, 1978) and *Metaphycus swirskii* ANNECKE and MYNHARDT (1979) (= *Metaphycus* aff. *stanleyi* COMP.) (VIGGIANI and MAZZONE, 1977), a new species of *Metaphycus* (*M. bartletti* ANNECKE and MYNHARDT) was imported in Italy from Israel (1) against *Saissetia oleae* (OLIVIER).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The imported material (about 80 specimens of *M. bartletti* emerged from the host on potato sprouts) was partially used to release the parasite on oleander and citrus plants infested by *Saissetia oleae* in the experimental field of the Institute of Agricultural Entomology-Portici and on another group of oleander plants at Torre del Greco (Na).

Beside, *M. bartletti* was reared on *S. oleae* growing on potato sprouts, since end May 1979.

In July 1979 about 200 parasites were released on citrus and olive plants in the experimental field of the Horticulture Institute, University of Naples-Portici, where suitable host stages of *S. oleae* for *M. bartletti* were rather rare.

After July 1979 the rearing of this parasite was stopped.

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From *S. oleae* material collected in the forementioned sites on citrus, olive and oleander plants in December 1979, parasitized scales (3th nymphs and young females) were isolated in gelatine capsules and the emerged parasites identified.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

From all samples *Metaphycus bartletti* and *Metaphycus swirskii* were recovered. The first species evidently reproduced during summer, when suitable host stages are rather rare. It is also interesting to underline that *M. swirskii* was released in the same site in 1977 (VIGGIANI and MAZZONE, 1977); therefore this species overwintered for two years.

According to laboratory and field data *M. bartletti* is a solitary or a gregarious parasite of 3th nymphs and young females of *S. oleae*. From one host stage female a maximum of 16 specimens (14 females and 2 males) have been obtained. In some cases, under laboratory conditions, from the same host both *M. bartletti* and *M. swirskii* emerged.

At present these two parasites are mass-reared on *S. oleae* at the Biological Control Center, Portici, for a large release in the main citrus and olive areas in Italy. *M. bartletti* has been promising for the biological control of the black scale (BLUMBERG and SWIRSKI, 1977).

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