

The moth *Erebus macrops* at Singapore Botanic Gardens

Subject: *Erebus macrops* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Erebidae).

Subject identified by: Craig Williams & Roger Kendrick.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG); 9 November 2015; 1400 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observers: Jeremy Woon, Robin Ngiam & Low Bing Wen.

Observation: One of about 13 cm wingspan was found on the outer wall of a building (House 6) at the National Biodiversity Centre (see attached picture). It was motionless throughout the few minutes of observation.



Photograph by Jeremy Woon

Remarks: According to Leong (2011), three species of the genus *Erebus* are known to occur in Singapore. They are *Erebus ephesperis* (Hübner), *Erebus hieroglyphica* (Drury) and *Erebus macrops* (Linnaeus). He opined that the latter two appear to be more elusive. *Erebus macrops* was recently reported from the Central Catchment Nature Reserve by the Singapore Moths Project (iNaturalist.org 2015). Despite these sightings, there is no representative specimen in the collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum (LKCNHM) at the National University of Singapore (Hwang Wei Song, personal communication, 2015).

The host plant of *Erebus macrops* is *Acacia pennata* (Leguminosae) (Robinson et al., 2011), a woody thorny climber. *Acacia pennata* ssp. *insuavis* (Lace) I.C. Nielsen, recently observed in a secondary forest in Singapore, is likely to be introduced from cultivation (Lua Hock Keong, personal communication, 2015). The lianescent or scandent members of this genus were recently proposed to be reclassified into the genus *Senegalia* (Maslin et al., 2013). *Acacia pennata* ssp. *insuavis* is not found in the SBG. However it is common for Lepidoptera to utilise closely related plants as hosts, and caterpillars of *Erebus macrops* are known to feed on plants of the genus *Entada* (Schabel, 2006). Both *Entada rheedii* and *Entada spiralis* are present in the SBG, and it is plausible that these are the host plants for *Erebus macrops*.

Note: The contributors thank Roger Kendrick for help with species identification, Hwang Wei Song for records of specimens in the LKCNHM, and Lua Hock Keong for information on plants.

References:

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