

Stem borer, *Xylocopa festiva*, at Dairy Farm Nature Park

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Subject: Stem borer, *Xylocopa festiva* (Insecta: Coleoptera: Cerambycidae).

Subject identified by: Chua Keng Soon

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah, Dairy Farm Nature Park; 29 May 2018; 1055 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest

Observers: Chua Keng Soon & Stella Ling.

Observation: An example of the stem borer *Xylocopa festiva* (pictured below), about 25 mm in body length, was observed at rest, 2 m above the ground, on a leaf of an *Artocarpus* tree.

Remarks: The longicorn beetle *Xylocopa festiva* is a serious pest of forests and plantations in Indonesia. It feeds on host trees from several plant families such as the Leguminosae (*Acacia mangium*, *Albizia* spp., *Pithecolobium* spp., *Paraserianthes falcataria*), Lamiaceae (*Tectona grandis*), Meliaceae (*Swietenia macrophylla*), Pinaceae (*Pinus merkusii*), Rubiaceae (*Coffea* spp.) and Sterculiaceae (*Theobroma* spp.). As its common name implies, the stem borer damages trees by boring into their trunks and branches. This attack weakens the tree, and makes it susceptible to secondary infestations by other pests or diseases (FAO, 2007: 11 & 17; Nair, 2000).



Photograph by Chua Keng Soon

In the plantations of the Indonesia albizia (*Paraserianthes falcataria*), *Xylocopa festiva* is a primary pest (Nair 2000: 17). Pest management of these plantations involves annual routine inspections and removing affected trees to eradicate the beetle population within. This is reported to reduce the infestation rate of the plantation to less than 10 percent. As the stem borer is known to kill albizia trees, whole plantations could be wiped out and financially crippling the plantation owners, if such measures are not in place (Nair 2000: 12).

References:

- FAO. 2007. *Forest Health & Biosecurity Working Papers: Overview of forest pests Indonesia*. Working Paper FBS/19E. Rome Italy. <http://www.fao.org/forestry/12292-08eb38098b5dda3dacb7b09224ab2cee.pdf>
- Nair, K.S.S. (ed.), 2000. *Insect Pests and Diseases of Indonesian Forests: an Assessment of the Major Trends, Research Efforts and the Literature*. Center for International Forestry Research, Bogor, Indonesia, 101 pp. Available at: http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/Insect-pests.pdf