

Barklice, *Clematoscenea* sp., at the Botanic Gardens

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Subjects: Barklice, *Clematoscenea* sp. (Insecta: Psocoptera: Psocidae).

Subjects identified by: Chua Keng Soon.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens; 19 May 2018; 1030-1055 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland. Managed vegetation of ornamental plants, shrubs and trees; surrounding area includes man-made lakes, road and concrete buildings.

Observer: Chua Keng Soon.

Observations: At 1030 hrs, two clusters of adult barklice believed to be a species of *Clematoscenea* were spotted in the shade on the tree trunk of a cultivated *Calophyllum soulattii* (Fig. 1). The clusters were about 80 and 120 cm off the ground. Each adult insect was about 6-7 mm in length (from head to edge of folded wings). Each cluster (Fig. 2) contained more than a hundred individual insect (Fig. 3).

About 50 m away, at 1055 hrs, a cluster of barklice nymphs (Fig. 4) was found on top of a one-metre tall bare bakau pole, in an open and sunny area, beside a lake. Each nymph was about 2.5-3 mm in length (from head to end of abdomen). There was an estimated 50 nymphs in the cluster. These nymphs are assumed to be the same species as the winged adults on the nearby tree trunk.

Remarks: Barklice are not related to true lice, and they are not parasitic. Many species inhabit tree trunks where winged adults and nymphs can be found together, feeding on lichen, fungi and dead plant tissues. Some species spin a blanket of web around the tree trunk under which they hide. (see Wang, 2011). The present observations are from an urban parkland, but the genus *Clematoscenea* can also be found in forested areas (Wang, 2011).

Reference: Wang L. K., 2011. Barklice. In: Ng, P. K. L., R. T. Corlett & H. T. W. Tan (eds.). *Singapore Biodiversity. An Encyclopedia of the Natural Environment and Sustainable Development*. Editions Didier Millet & The Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research. p. 236.



Fig. 1. Two clusters of adult barklice (each indicated by an arrow) on a tree trunk. Photograph by Chua Keng Soon



Fig. 2. Cluster of adult barklice on tree trunk, compared to a thumb of an adult human.



Fig. 3. Dorsal view of winged adults.



Fig. 4. Dorsal view of nymphs.

Photographs by Chua Keng Soon