

## New Singapore record of a stick-like mantis of the genus *Phyllothelys*

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**Subject:** *Phyllothelys* sp. (Insecta: Mantodea: Hymenopodidae: Phyllothelyinae).

**Subject identified by:** Jerome Lee, Foo Maosheng and Benedict Yeap.

**Location, date, and time:** Singapore Island, Windsor Nature Park, along Venus Walk; 19 October 2020; 0824 hrs.

**Habitat:** Sub-urban parkland at the edge of secondary forest.

**Observers:** Kong Ann Nee and Alex Kang Beng Hong.

**Observation:** An adult brown, stick-like praying mantis of about 5.5 cm total length was found motionless on an umbrella dracaena (*Dianella ensifolia*) plant. It was perched on a purple fruit of the plant. The observers first spotted the insect from a distance of about two metres. As they approached it to take macro-photographs, the mantis changed from a bent pose (Fig 1) to an erect pose (Fig. 2), but kept its gaze on the observers (Fig. 3) while maintaining its position on the fruit (Fig. 4).

**Remarks:** The specimen shown here is identified as *Phyllothelys* based on the presence of a horn on its head vertex that is almost three times as long as its head (Wood-Mason, 1876). Mantises of this genus are brown, have a median keel on the head vertex, and compound eyes that are more ovoid. Identification to species from the attached photographs is not possible as it requires close examination of the genitalia, and the minutes features on the pronotum, femora and lobes on the legs.

The featured mantis seems to represent the first record of the genus *Phyllothelys* in Singapore (see Woo, 2011). As members of this genus are known to occur in neighbouring Malaysia and Indonesia (Ehrmann and Roy, 2009; Patel & Singh, 2016), the presence of such mantises in Singapore should not be unexpected. However, the possibility of this individual being an escaped pet imported from elsewhere also cannot be ruled out. With their unique and bizarre appearances, mantises identified as *Phyllothelys brevis* have been offered for sale as pets on the USMantis website ([www.USMantis.com](http://www.USMantis.com)).

### References:

- Ehrmann R & Roy R (2009) Taxonomy and synonymy of *Phyllothelys* Wood-Mason (Dictyoptera: Mantodea). *Annales de la Société entomologique de France* (N.S.), 45 (1): 67–76.
- Patel S & Singh R (2016) Updated Checklist and Distribution of Mantidae (Mantodea: Insecta) of the World. *International Journal for Research Studies in Zoology (IJRSZ)*, 2: 17–54.
- Woo HPM (2011) Mantids. Order Mantodea. In: Ng PKL, Corlett RT & Tan HTW (eds.) *Singapore Biodiversity. An Encyclopedia of the Natural Environment and Sustainable Development*. Editions Didier Millet & Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research. p. 373.
- Wood-Mason J (1876) On some remarkable species of Mantidae. *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, 18(4): 506–507.



Fig 1. Lateral view with body bent forward.  
 Photograph by Kong Ann Nee

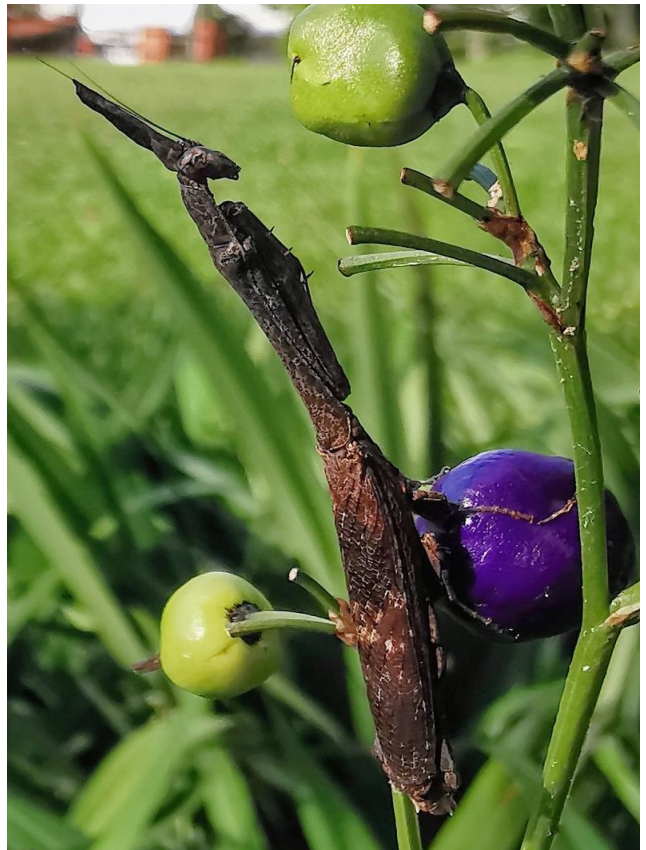


Fig 2. Lateral view with body erect.  
 Photograph by Alex Kang



Fig 3. Frontal view with head facing the camera.  
 Photograph by Kong Ann Nee



Fig 4. Fronto-lateral view showing the underside of the abdomen.  
 Photograph by Alex Kang

Fig. 1-4. Various views of the mantis, *Phyllothelys* sp., perching on an umbrella dracaena (*Dianell ensifolia*) plant.