

INSECT SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE THISTLE PLANT, *Cynara* SP. IN EL-GABAL EL-AKHDAR, LIBYA

Amin, A. H.

**Dept. of Plant Protection, College of Agriculture, University of
Salahaddin, Erbil, Iraq. E-mail: ahkorachi@yahoo.com .**

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to survey the insect species associated with the thistle plant, *Cynara* sp. at El-Baida area, El-Gabal El-Akhdar, Libya during the period from September 2001 through August 2003. Obtained results revealed the presence of 27 insect species belong to 19 families and seven orders associated with *Cynara* sp. Order Coleoptera was represented by nine species; *Agapanthia anularis* L. and *A. cardui* L. (Family Cerambycidae), *Cassida* sp. and *Phyllotreta* sp. (Family Chrysomelidae), *Coccinella septempunctata* L. and *C. novemnotata* L. (Family Coccinellidae), *Larinus* sp. and *Lixus* sp. (Family Curculionidae) and *Potosia morio* F. (Family Scarabaeidae). Order Diptera was represented by two species; *Acanthiophilus helianthi* Rossi and *Chaetorellia carthami* Stack (Family Tephritidae). Order Hemiptera was represented by three species, *Anthocoris* sp. (Family Anthocoridae), *Spilostethus pandurus* Scop. (Family Lygaeidae) and *Dolycoris baccarum* L. (Family Pentatomidae). Order Homoptera was represented by three species, *Aphis compositae* Theobald and *A. craccivora* Koch (Family Aphididae), and *Empoasca* sp. (Family Cicadellidae). Order Hymenoptera was represented by three species; *Andrena* sp. and *Apis mellifera* L. (Family Apidae), and *Megachile* sp. (Family Megachilidae). Order Lepidoptera was represented by six species; *Pieris rapae* L. and *Colias croceus* Fourc. (Family Pieridae), *Pyrgus* sp. (Family Hesperidae), *Vanessa cardui* L. (Family Nymphalidae), *Pyronia* sp. (Family Satyridae), and *Macroglossa stellatarum* L. (Family Sphingidae). Order Thysanoptera was represented by one species, *Thrips* sp. (Family Thripidae). The results suggest that the species; *A. annularis*, *A. cardui*, *Larinus* sp., *Lixus* sp., *P. morio*, *A. helianthi* and *C. carthami* can be used as biological control agents for controlling the thistle plant, *Cynara* sp. at El-Baida area, El-Gabal El-Akhdar, Libya.

INTRODUCTION

The thistle plant, *Cynara* sp. belongs to family Asteraceae (= Compositae) and is considered a common weed in most areas of El-Gabal El-Akhdar in Libya. It grows in the scrub-lands and roadsides causes several damages, in addition that it itself is a plant pest in the grasslands, sheltering many insect pests. It causes also mechanical damages, such as wounds and physical injuries resulting from the sharp spines and spurs, which cover plant surfaces to the animals, especially in its late stages of growth. Beside, it creates general problems, such as preventing visibility on the roads, especially in the corners and sometimes it is a source of fires in natural forests (Abu Ramila, 1988).

Cynara sp. is subject to be infested with several species of insects belong to various orders and families. The most important and common ones are the flies belong to Order Diptera, Family Tephritidae; *Acanthiophilus helianthi*, *Chaetorellia australis*, *Tephritis postica* and *Urophora quadrifasciata* (Clement and Mimmocchi, 1988; Maddox *et al.*, 1990; Manojlovic, 1991-1992 and Briese *et al.*, 1996), Order Coleoptera including;