

NEW BIOCONTROL AGENTS DEVELOPED FOR LANTANA

A J URBAN, S NESER, J-R BAARS, D O SIMELANE, A DEN BREËYEN,
K MABUDA, H KLEIN, H E WILLIAMS, F HEYSTEK, M S PHENYE,
P F MPEDI, G A SAMUELS and L G MADIRE

*Weeds Research Division, Agricultural Research Council-Plant Protection Research Institute,
Private Bag X134, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa*

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Nine new, host-specific biocontrol agents for the suppression of lantana weed, *Lantana camara*, have been developed in the quarantine facilities of ARC-PPRI in Pretoria and Stellenbosch since 1994. These are to supplement control of the weed by mechanical and chemical means, and the action of 10 biocontrol agents established earlier. The nine new agents (seven insects, one mite and one fungus), and the symptoms of damage they cause, are shown in annotated photographs.

The leaf-sucking mirid, *Falconia intermedia* (released in 1999), and the herringbone leaf-miner, *Ophiomyia camarae* (2001), have both established and are reducing photosynthesis and causing premature defoliation. Establishment of the leaf-spot fungus, *Mycovellosiella lantanae* var. *lantanae* (2002), is undetermined. The trimorphic flea-beetle, *Alagoasa extrema*, was found insufficiently host-specific for release in Africa, and was exported (2002) for possible use in Australia. To be released in S. Africa this year (2003) are the petiole-galling weevil, *Coelocephalopion camarae*; the root beetle, *Longitarsus columbicus centroamericanus*; the inchworm, *Leptostales ignifera*; and the flower gall mite, *Aceria lantanae*. The arid-adapted leafhopper, *Barela parvisaccata*, might be released next year (2004).

With continued state and private funding, the impact of the new agents on lantana will be measured in the field, and additional candidate stem-attackers, seed-reducers and fungal pathogens will be tested in quarantine (2003-2006). It is hoped that these new biocontrol agents will contribute significantly to achieving adequate suppression of lantana.