



COMMON HEDGE BLUE

A note on the new larval host plant for Common Hedge Blue *Acytolepis puspa* (Horsfield, 1828) in India



Fig 1: Egg on leaf



Fig 2: Egg on Petiole



Fig 3: Larva



Fig 4: Pupa



Fig 5: Adult



Fig 6: *Peltophorum pterocarpum*

Illustrating the life cycle of *Acytolepis puspa*

Insecta

[Class of Insects]

Lepidoptera

[Order of Moths and Butterflies]

Lycaenidae

[Family of Butterflies]

Acytolepis puspa

[Common Hedge Blue]

Species described by
Horsfield in 1828

Introduction

The Common Hedge Blue, *Acytolepis puspa* (Horsfield, 1828) (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) is a small (wingspan: 28-35mm) pale blue butterfly with white face and black eyes (Kunte 2000). The underside of the wings has black lines and spots, while the upper side is glossy pale blue. Kunte et al. (2016) report four subspecies of *Acytolepis puspa*, and the subspecies known from Kerala is *Acytolepis puspa felderi* Toxopeus, 1927, commonly known as Malabar Common Hedge Blue. According to Kunte (2000) it is a common butterfly found all over India and the rest of the Oriental region in deciduous, semi-evergreen and evergreen



forests. This species is widely distributed in Kerala. Here we report a new host plant for this butterfly, based on our observation from the Kerala Agricultural University campus, (10°32'-10°33'N & 76°16'-76°17'E) Thrissur, Kerala, south India. The Common Hedge Blue has already been reported from the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) main campus (Aneesh et al. 2013).

During the course of the study on the butterflies of KAU main campus at Thrissur, Kerala we found the Common Hedge Blue *Acytolepis puspa* breeding on the host plant *Peltophorum pterocarpum* of the subfamily Caesalpinioideae of family Fabaceae. The present observation of *Acytolepis puspa* using *Peltophorum pterocarpum* as host plant is first ever record from India. However, there is a previous record of *Peltophorum pterocarpum* being used as the host plant by the Common Hedge Blue from Hong Kong (Robinson et al. 2010).

Life cycle of Common Hedge Blue, *Acytolepis puspa*

On 7 August 2013 at 09:25hrs, we saw the Common Hedge Blue, *Acytolepis puspa* laying eggs on the *Peltophorum pterocarpum* at the KAU main campus. It laid about 20-30 tiny, disc shaped white eggs, on the petioles and leaves of the host plant (Fig 1). Interestingly, all the eggs laid were on the tender-most leaves and their petioles (Fig 2). The eggs were independent to each other. The eggs were closely monitored at least twice a day. The eggs hatched and the larvae (Fig 3) could be sighted on the 8 August 2013 at 17:05hr, about 32.5 hours after the eggs were laid. The larvae fed on the tender leaves of *Peltophorum pterocarpum*. The pupation (Fig 4) was observed after about eight days, on 16 August 2013, and the final emergence of the butterfly (Fig 5) occurred after seven days of pupation, on 23 August 2013. Thus the total breeding cycle of Common Hedge Blue, takes about 16days, between the egg laying and the emergence.

Peltophorum pterocarpum (DC.) (Fig 6) is a deciduous tree belonging to the subfamily Caesalpinioideae of family Fabaceae. It is one of the introduced tree species to India and it is native of Southeast Asia (Sasidharan 2010).

**First Record of
Common Hedge Blue
breeding on the host
plant Yellow flame tree
(*P. pterocarpum*)**



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