

AN ORTHOPTEROUS PEST OF APPLE TREES
IN THE INTERIOR OF B. C.

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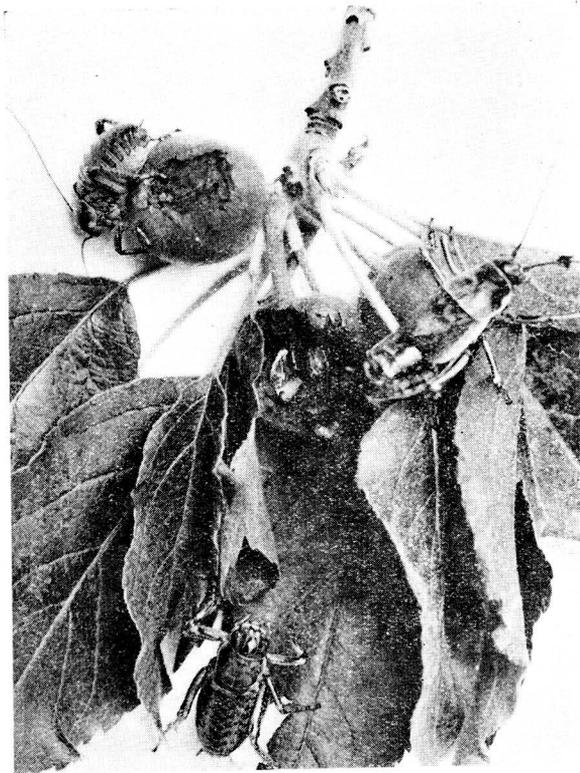
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For a number of years, while occupied in the general practice of economic entomology as applied to orchard work, I had been completely mystified by a certain type of injury to young fruits. First of all, some seven years ago, my attention was attracted by finding young green peaches, at Creston in the Kootenay Lake area, which showed what looked like distinct toothmarks of a mouse. The peaches were only an inch in diameter and, as I thought, quite unattractive to man, beast, or insect. However, it was evident that something was religiously sampling a considerable number of the young peaches, taking a few bites out of each. In some cases the peaches affected were hanging upon the outer branches of the trees and the injury to them was in such a position that, if caused by a mouse, it would have required quite an acrobatic feat. There were the toothmarks, however, as plain as could be, and I searched during many fruitless hours for an insect capable of inflicting such toothlike marks. In the end, I persuaded myself that possibly bats must be the culprits—the only thing that would appear to be capable of sitting upon the fruit in such pendulous postures while inflicting the toothmarks.

During the past few years I again noticed the same familiar, rodent-like toothmarks on young fruit in June, this time, however, on young apples, both at Vernon and Salmon Arm. A few young prunes were also noticed to be injured in the same manner. In the case of the prunes, and also the peaches at Creston, the damage seemed more confined to a few clearly printed and deep-cut toothmarks, very similar to those made by mice in chewing things. The young apples, however, had, in many cases, more than mere toothmarks, as the culprits had actually eaten out small areas.

In June, 1934, while examining some sprayed apple trees early one morning, I suddenly found out the cause of all the injuries. There, sitting upon an apple, was a large grey cricket, right in the act of biting into the fruit! The mystery was solved at last. The culprit, identified by E. R. Buckell as *Cyphoderris monstrosa* Uhler, is one of the large crickets quite common in B.C., the males of which may be heard singing amongst the brush and upon trees in the summer evenings. By habit the cricket is a nocturnal feeder, hiding by day deep down in rubbish under boards and logs, or in cracks and cavities in the ground. Most of the feeding, I believe, is done in the earlier and warmer part

of the night. If one takes a flashlight and examines trees and shrubs after dark where these crickets abound, they may be seen sitting on the bark or twigs. They do not mind the light and are easily taken by placing an open jar below them, into which they fall at once when touched.



The accompanying photograph shows some of these crickets with young apples upon which they have been feeding. The marks caused by the sharp mandibles of these insects very much resemble the tooth-marks made by mice when they take a few bites out of a fruit.

Damage from these insects is mostly confined to orchards having sufficient cover around the trees in which the crickets can find suitable shelter in the daytime. It is doubtful whether arsenical sprays would prove of very practical value as the damage is seldom severe enough to warrant the heavy application that would be necessary.