

NOTES ON *MEGATHYMUS POLINGI* (MEGATHYMIIDÆ)

by DON B. STALLINGS and J. R. TURNER

*Megathymus polingi* Skinner is another of the species of *Megathymus* that does not appear to have been collected in recent years. For many years the only specimen in our collection was a single male that was collected about the time that the species was named.

Due to misidentification of this species (we have seen specimens of at least three other species labelled *M. polingi*) there has been a question in some peoples' mind as to whether *M. polingi* was a good species. Since 1946 we had felt sure that we knew the food plant, but it was not until September of 1955 that Dr. and Mrs. R. C. TURNER succeeded in collecting larvæ of this species. Of the twelve larvæ they collected between Redington and Tucson, Arizona, nine pupated and emerged from Sept. 27th to October 16th.

This species, which is the smallest of the known species in the U. S. A., is easily identified by the well defined yellow-white discal band across the under-surface of the secondaries. The genitalia are also distinctive. The food plant is *Agave schottii* Engelm. This species of *Agave* belongs to the group of species with the inflorescence spicate and is the smallest of true *Agave* in the U. S. A. The plant is so small that the larvæ are unable to use the leaves alone for the larval cavity but must bore over half of the cavity in the base of the plant. They do not make an outlet until shortly before they pupate. The outlet, which comes through several leaves, has the usual "trap-door". We doubt that *M. polingi* uses any food plant other than *A. schottii*.

*Megathymus polingi*, *M. mariae* Barnes & Benjamin, and *M. stephensi* appear to be the only *Agave* feeders in the U. S. A. which, during the larval stage, deposit their excrement outside the burrow, similar to the *Yucca* feeders. The other *Agave* feeders in the U. S. A. have little or no excrement to dispose of; at least there is no external sign of it.

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The check list of the Lepidoptera of Florida, by C. P. KIMBALL, is nearly ready for the printer. It has been held so that the new HEINRICH Phycitinae revision could be used for the treatment of that subfamily in the check list. Some colored plates will be printed in the list, which is to be published by the Florida State Plant Board.

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