

An Introduction To *Carausius sp. PSG 230*

By Natalie Ford

Carausius #230 is a fairly new species and there is little information about it on the internet, so I thought I'd write a short piece on this rather lovely species!

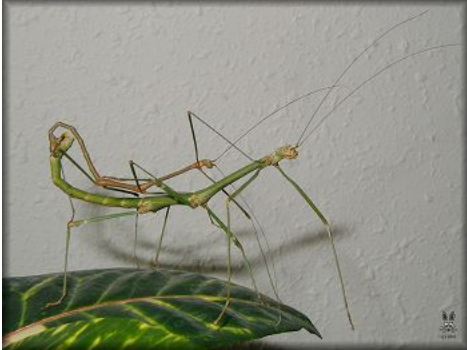


Photo: Adult pair mating (by Jaromir Zajicek)

Basics

A member of the Lonchodinae sub-family, *Carausius #230* is a sexual species that originated from the Philippines and was collected by Andy Maluche in Bobon, Northern Samar. Both sexes are wingless, with adult males measuring around 8.5cm and females around 12cm body length. They are very easy to breed and have a wonderful temperament, making them suitable for beginners and children alike. They don't spray and appear to have no harmful defences that I am aware of.

Food and Environment

This species feeds well on Bramble and Raspberry, but has also been reported to eat Oak, Hypericum, Cherry, Wild Cherry, *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian pepper plant – fairly common in the UK), and species of *Crataegus*.

A cage that is at least 45cm high is required to allow sufficient height for successful moulting. Regarding the level of humidity at which this species should be kept, I have found very varying information – from very humid with no ventilation, to low humidity and very ventilated! Although several people have reported success keeping them in humid conditions, I found that I lost quite a few nymphs when kept in medium-high humidity environment (i.e. very limited ventilation), but have had 100% success keeping them in a well ventilated cage (two full mesh sides) with normal room humidity, spraying them on a daily basis.

Ova

Carausius #230 ova are charcoal grey/dark brown with a prominent capitulum (lid). They are round and approximately 3mm long by 1.5mm wide. The ova should be kept in medium humidity, at room temperature and take 3-4 months to hatch.



Ova (by Jaromir Zajicek)



Newly-hatched nymph (by Tom Gay)

Nymphs

The nymphs are quite pretty with long antennae and a striking dark, shiny body which is complimented by white antennae bases and tips and also white where each of their legs join the body.

A nymph immediately hatched from the ovum (left) has rather long and lanky looking legs, but within a few hours the body expands to a more



1st instar nymph (by Jaromir Zajicek)

proportioned size (right). The insects are difficult to sex until around two sheds before maturity, when the females become broader and more olive green in colour, whilst the males stay dark brown. The end of a male's abdomen is more pointed than the female and becomes slightly darker than the rest of his body. The males also gain a lump underneath the end of their abdomen as the reproductive organs develop. Nymphs take around 3 to 5 months to mature.

Adults

The very shiny look donned by the nymphs is lessened in the adults, but they retain the white base and tips on their antennae (although the pale base is less noticeable in the males).



Adult male (by Jaromir Zajicek)

The males are very slim with quite an attractive colouring – the body being varying shades of brown with green legs and brown knees! Underneath each of the mid and rear legs is a tiny appendage,



Adult male (my own photo)

but otherwise the body is completely smooth. The abdomen widens at the base and terminates with small pincer-like cerci. The male's head is slender and delicate with two tiny bumps on top of the head, between the eyes.

The adult females are usually olive green in colour but can vary in their shade of green. They are green all over but have light brown knees with a white band on the upper part of the leg just above the knee. In addition, the joints between each of the thoracic and abdominal segments are decorated with two or four dark brown spots on a pale green background. Each segment on the underside of the abdomen



Adult female (my own photo)

also has a dark brown spot. The females are mostly smooth but a small appendage under the upper leg can be seen just before the knee joint (most noticeable on the mid and rear legs) and the head carries two small spikes on the top, in between the eyes.



Adult female (by Jaromir Zajicek)

The adults may 'jump' when startled and will often fall to the ground as a result – be careful not to have any hot drinks near by when handling them.

However, this seems to be their only defence and they are generally very easy to handle, with a gentle nature. Females start to lay ova approximately three weeks after maturity.



Acknowledgments and Further Information

I would like to thank Jaromir Zajicek, Tom Gay and Louis Tranchet for giving me permission to use their fantastic photographs. Many thanks also to the following people who provided information to help me write this article: Tiffany from Sticktalk, Chris Pull, David Holland, Giovanni from Italy, Tom Gay and Marco Feroleto from Italy.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, information available on the internet is limited and I was able to find only four websites providing information about Carausius 230. There are some great photos on these sites and they are definitely worth a visit...

- Jaromir Zajicek's site: <http://www.strasilky.cz/psg230.htm>
- Tom Gay's site: <http://www.wandelendetakken.be/soortlijst/psg230.htm>
- <http://lemondedesphasmes.free.fr/Pages/galeriephotos/galeriephotos/carausius.htm> featuring photos by Louis Tranchet and Gérard Joly
- <http://fotomacroinsetti.altervista.org/carausius%20sp.htm>

Adult pair climbing on my partner's daughter, Katie.