

# Scentsless Plant Bugs, *Jadera* sp. (Insecta: Hemiptera: Rhopalidae)<sup>1</sup>

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*The Featured Creatures collection provides in-depth profiles of insects, nematodes, arachnids and other organisms relevant to Florida. These profiles are intended for the use of interested laypersons with some knowledge of biology as well as academic audiences.*

## Introduction

Two species of *Jadera* are known from Florida, *Jadera antica* Walker and *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer), but only the latter species is common. When *Jadera haematoloma* appears in large colonies in yards and gardens, people become curious and/or alarmed and contact agricultural officials for information. Mothers often become upset over their children's clothes being stained red from the squashed bodies of *Jadera haematoloma*, due to their children playing on infested lawns. The bugs aggregate to feed on seeds that have dropped to the ground from trees overhead, especially from goldenrain trees, *Koelreuteria* spp. (Sapindaceae). Wheeler (1982) documented *Jadera haematoloma* as a nuisance insect in Texas and having invaded homes from nearby Chinaberry trees in Oklahoma. *Jadera* bugs are often confused with the boxelder bug, *Boisea trivittatus* (Say), but they are different species in the same insect family. Boxelder bugs also cause concern when they appear in great numbers at the end of summer or early fall.



Figure 1. Nymphs of the Jadera bug, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer), on the side of a house.  
Credits: Robert E. Wilt, Jr.

## Synonymy

*Jadera haematoloma* was described previously in the genus *Leptocoris* and has been recorded in *Serinetha*, *Lygaeus*, and *Pyrrhotes*. *Jadera antica* (Walker) is the name currently accepted for *Jadera sanguinolenta* (Fabricius) of various authors having reported it in southern Florida and islands south of Florida. The true *sanguinolenta* is a Neotropical species that occurs in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, but not in the continental U.S.A.

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## Distribution

*Jadera haematoloma* has been reported from some of the southeastern states west to Texas and California, several central states, and from Mexico, the West Indies, southward to Central America and Colombia; also, Hawaii. In Florida, it ranges over the peninsula, but seems to be scarce in the north, and strangely absent from the Florida panhandle, as discerned from records in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA). *Jadera haematoloma* has been taken during every month in Florida, with May being the peak month, primarily in central Florida, the region containing the majority of records. In southern Florida, there is a more even distribution throughout the year, with no distinct spring peak according to FSCA records. *Jadera antica* records are scarce; it has been collected only a few times in Monroe and Dade counties, and once in Osceola (15-III-56 by H.A. Denmark). Records (FSCA) for *J. antica* in Florida are in March, April, June, August, and November.



Figure 2. Nymphs of the Jadera bug, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer), on a tree trunk in central Florida. Credits: Ronald Sperry

## Descriptions

### Adults

*Jadera haematoloma* (with normal wings) has a length of 9.5 to 13.5 mm ( $\sim\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  in) and width of 3 to 4 mm ( $\sim\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{16}$  in). The length of the shortwinged form (brachyptera) usually is 7 to 8 mm ( $\sim\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  in) long. *Jadera haematoloma* adults are mostly black or brownish-black, but their eyes, orbits and ocelli are reddish, as are their shoulders and the borders of their abdomens. *Jadera antica* has a length 7.5 to 11 mm ( $\sim\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{7}{16}$  in) and a width 2.5 to 4.0 mm ( $\sim\frac{1}{16}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in). *Jadera antica* is basically brownish-salmon in color, with some specimens more brownish, others more reddish; fuscous dots are abundant over the upper surface and on the sides of the thorax, eyes, sides of head, and shoulders.

The abdomen is reddish with darker red spots. For more detailed technical descriptions or keys, consult Blatchley (1926), Gollner-Scheiding (1979), or Hoebeke and Wheeler (1982). For a broader understanding of *Jadera* and its relatives, consult Chopra (1967) and Schaefer and Chopra (1982).



Figure 3. Adult Jadera bug, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer). Credits: Paul M. Choate, UF/IFAS

### Nymphs

The nymphs of both species are predominately red, except for the thorax, antennae, beak, and legs, which are brown. Small dark setae are nearly uniformly spaced over the whole body as revealed by a hand lens or microscope. The nymphs have the family characteristic of two abdominal scent glands lying so close together in the middle of the dorsal abdomen that segment 5 is constricted at midline.

### Hosts

Schaefer and Chopra (1982) reported that *Jadera* and the closely related genus *Leptocoris* of the subfamily Serinetinae have a clear preference for plants of the Sapindales, especially of the Sapindaceae. *Jadera haematoloma* feeds on a variety of plants but prefers balloonvine, *Cardiospermum* spp. (Sapindaceae) which grows in southern Florida. Additional hosts include other Sapindaceae, *Ficus* spp. (Moraceae) and *Althaea* spp. (Malvaceae). In some areas the bugs are observed feeding so often on goldenrain tree seeds, *Koelreuteria* spp., (Sapindaceae), that they are referred to as “goldenrain tree bugs.”





Figure 4. Nymph of the Jadera bug, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer).  
Credits: Paul M. Choate, UF/IFAS



Figure 5. Scentless plant bug eggs, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer).  
Credits: L. J. Buss, UF/IFAS

## Survey and Detection

Examine ground areas under trees shedding seeds, particularly goldenrain trees, where bugs come to feed on the seeds. Look for the dark, red-shouldered ½ inch long adults primarily on leaves, stems, and ground areas. Nymphs are mostly a conspicuous red color.

## Management

In most instances, no attempts to control *Jadera* spp. are necessary. Documentation is lacking as far as this being a plant pest of any consequence. A small concentration on a plant often can be destroyed by hand collecting. If the bugs

are a nuisance in lawns or playgrounds, raking to remove the seeds that the bugs are feeding on should be helpful. If nonpesticidal methods are not practical, consult your local office of the Cooperative Extension Service for insecticide recommendations.



Figure 6. Goldenrain tree, *Koelreuteria* spp., with seed pods.  
Credits: L. J. Buss, UF/IFAS



Figure 7. Adult Jadera bug, *Jadera haematoloma* (Herrich-Schaeffer), feeding on a goldenrain tree seed.  
Credits: L. J. Buss, UF/IFAS

## Selected References

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