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Some Mosquitoes With Unusual Habits

By ELIZABETH N. MARKS, Brisbane.

It is well known that all mosquitoes require water in which to breed, and people have observed the larvae or "wrigglers" in tanks, creeks and waterholes. Larvae of some species, however, are less easy to locate.

Those of the genus Taeniorynchus (also known as Mansonia) have the breathing siphon with sharply pointed tip and special saw-like appendage, and this is inserted into the root of an aquatic plant, from which the larva is then able to obtain its oxygen with the water to breathe as do the larvae of almost all other mosquitoes. This genus includes *T. xanthogaster*, "the golden mosquito," a striking orange coloured adult sometimes encountered in the vicinity of swamps, particularly during the autumn. A large number of mosquitoes breed in water-holding cavities in the branches or exposed roots of trees and hollows in stumps or fallen logs. Another group selects the water which collects at the base of the leaf axils of such plants as pandanus, cunjoe, and eucalypts, bananas, pineapples and certain grasses and sedges. Others again are found in the "pitchers" of pitcher plants.

Among those breeding in plant axils are *Aedes kochi* and its allies, the larvae of which are clothed with tufts of stiff hairs, which give them a "hedgehog" appearance, and which enable them to crawl for quite long distances over a moist surface, a very useful attribute since a leaf axil is liable to rot or dry out. The adult of *A. kochi*, a pest species in New Guinea, is speckled black and white.

Also found in plant axils, sometimes in barely a thimbleful of water, are larvae of the genus Harpagomyia. The adults are small mosquitoes ornamented with brilliant silvery scales and with unique feeding habits, which were first observed in detail by Jacobson in Java.

In most mosquitoes the proboscis is a fairly straight appendage of uniform diameter; in *Harpagomyia* it is specially adapted with a flexible joint and a very swollen tip clothed with long hairs. Food is obtained from ants of the genus *Cremastogetes*. The mosquito places itself in front of an advancing ant, sometimes nipping the ant between the front legs. The ant stops and opens its jaws, and the mosquito thrusts the swollen tip of its proboscis into the ant's mouth and absorbs the food offered, while the ant strokes the tip of the proboscis with its palpi.

The species mentioned above all occur in the vicinity of Cairns.

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BY JEAN PETRASS

The recent inauguration by the Q.N.C. of monthly field excursions is proving an unqualified success. The highlight of these, so far, was the June trip made by forty-seven Club members and friends to the hinterland township of Chillagoe, about 130 miles west of Cairns.

The chief objective was inspection of the caves at Chillagoe and Mun-gana, but none were disappointed to find the limestone belt in which these are situated to be in itself worth the visit. A strip of magnificent country! A few miles below Chillagoe, the bluff-white and mottled limestone crags begin to supplant the granite country, their channelled and peaked formations rivalling in beauty anything of that kind presented by Fitzpatrick in his colour films of Arizona and Mexico.

In contrast were the forested hills, their grass in the "dry" a strawberry-coloured background for their embroi-dery of dispersed ever-green vegetation.

Chillagoe itself was found to be somewhat of a deserted village, set in the midst of a gigantic, delightfully