The propensity of different larval stages of lacewing *Chrysoperla carnea* (Stephens) (Neuroptera, Chrysopidae) to control aphid *Myzus persicae* (Sulzer) (Homoptera: Aphididae) evaluated on Canola *Brassica napus* L.
The propensity of different larval stages of lacewing *Chrysoperla carnea* (Stephens) (Neuroptera: Chrysopidae) to control aphid *Myzus persicae* (Sulzer) (Homoptera: Aphididae) evaluated on Canola *Brassica napus* L.

*Muhammad Sarwar*

*Nuclear Institute of Agriculture, Tandojam- 70060, Sindh, Pakistan*

*E-mail: drmsarwar64@yahoo.com*

**Abstract**

Green lacewings are considered among the most effective generalist predators of aphids, in the present experimentation, the uses of 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars chrysopid *Chrysoperla carnea* (Stephens) (Neuroptera: Chrysopidae) larvae against aphids pest were investigated under field conditions in *Brassica napus* L. Four releases of predator’s 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars larvae were made from the time of aphid’s appearance on canola crop till its maturity at fortnightly intervals. The influences on aphids due to the larvae of *C. carnea* predator were assessed by examining pest incidence, abundance of the natural enemies and seed yield recorded at crop harvest in the test field. Results indicated that predators, irrespective of their developmental stage, reacted very positively to their preys’ reduction except in untreated control. Of the different larval stages tested, the applications of 1\textsuperscript{st} instars followed by 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars larvae were most effective in reducing aphids’ population compared with untreated control. In the similar fashion, the releases of 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} instars larvae of *C. carnea* were more effective in increasing crop yields compared
with check treatment. Obviously, the applications of 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} instars larvae of \textit{C. carnea} involved efficiently in prey location and consumption, and performed predation activity for longer period (2-3 weeks). On the other hand, the release of 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars larvae was too late to play a direct beneficial role in crop protection suggesting that they may have less time (1 week) to remain involved in efficient prey consumption. Further, 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} instars larvae may be very hungrier and ate more pests in study areas without resting or moving to new location and thus can potentially be used to enhance biological control of aphids.

**Key words:** aphid, plant protection, insect pest, canola, rape, lacewing.

1. Introduction

Canola refers to the cultivars of either rapeseed (\textit{Brassica napus} L.) or field mustard (\textit{Brassica campestris} L. or \textit{Brassica rapa}) in the family Brassicaceae. Its seeds are used to produce edible oil suitable for consumption by humans and livestock (Dupont \textit{et al.}, 1989). Canola crop is attacked by a number of insect pests of which aphids are very important. The green peach aphids \textit{Myzus persicae} (Sulzer) (Homoptera: Aphididae) tend to feed on the underside of the canola. The green peach aphids feed by sucking sap from their hosts, and the seedlings of crops can be stunted by the attack of large population of this species. This aphid vectors virus diseases in more than 30 plant families, including \textit{Brassica} sp., (Hill, 1983). It can attain very high densities on young plant tissue, causing water stress, wilting, and reducing growth rate of the plant. Prolonged aphids infestation can cause appreciable reduction in yield of crop (Sarwar, 2011). Contamination of harvestable plant material with aphids or with aphid’s
honeydew also causes losses. Aphids are inherently difficult to kill with contact insecticides because they are often under the leaves or on new sheltered plant growth. Even systemic insecticides, which can kill aphids feeding under the leaf when applied to the upper surface, are much less effective at cool temperature (McLeod, 1991). Use of chemicals has so far been considered the most effective means of control of the pests. Since the use of pesticides is wrought with several disadvantages, the biological control program based on integrated pest management is more rational strategy (Ahmad et al., 2011). Biological control is a method of controlling pests through the use of natural enemies in agriculture that is an environmentally sound and effective means of mitigating pest density (Sarwar et al., 2012; Sarwar, 2013 a; Sarwar, 2013 b).

The species in genus *Chrysoperla* have long been considered the most important naturally occurring predators in many cropping systems, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, fiber and forage crops, ornamentals, greenhouse crops, and forests. Worldwide, they are also ranked as some of the most commonly used and commercially available natural enemies. Their larva, commonly called an aphid lion, is a voracious feeder and can consume up to 200 aphids or other prey per week. In addition to aphids, it can eat mites and insect pests including thrips, mealybugs, immature whiteflies, small caterpillars and insects’ eggs (Tauber et al., 2000).

Lacewing larvae are also known to feed on a wide variety of other soft-bodied arthropods including a lot of different aphid species and spiders by attacking prey and sucking out their body fluids. It is a voracious feeder on first instar nymphs of mealybug, *Phenacoccus solenopsis* Tinsley (Khan et al., 2012). The use of lacewings to control arthropod pests has been reported for several crops, worldwide (Canard et al., 1984). According to Kannan (1999), natural enemies
encountered preying on aphids were chrysopids, coccinellids and syrphids, the first of these being the most important and dominant predators. A number of studies have demonstrated the role of lacewing *Chrysoperla carnea* (Stephens) (Neuroptera: Chrysopidae) releases to enhance biological control of aphids (Sarwar et al., 2011). Messina and Sorenson (2001) reported that lacewings reduced the aphid population on some plants and their effectiveness was 84%. These studies have shown that feeding and deployment of lacewing for the manipulation of its populations as aphid predator is currently used in integrated management of this pest.

Biological control by the use of predator *C. carnea* has also gained importance for pest management in Pakistan. Some recent studies provide a crucial example of release sites for lacewings against *Bemisia tabaci* (Genn.) in cotton (Zia et al., 2008), to manage the population of aphids on wheat (Iqbal et al., 2008) and to control *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hubner) in tomato (Usman et al., 2012). Results depict that *C. carnea* can be used as an effective biological control agent for successful implementation of integrated pest management program to reduce the use of insecticides and save foreign exchange spent on pesticides import. The efficiency of lacewing to control pests can be affected by many factors, including use of different predator instars which may be a crucial factor in the success of augmentative biological control. Evaluation of *C. carnea* releases in the field showed that the releases of its larvae were having more survival as compared to the releases in egg form. For example, releases of second-instars larvae have proven very successful for the control of the green peach aphid in peppers, tomato and eggplant (Tauber et al., 2000). Lacewings commonly are sold and dispensed as eggs or adults, however, larval releases may sometimes be more effective. Eggs are less reliable for releases and some early releases did not hatch, probably because of poor weather conditions. Further, the eggs may not hatch if weather is extremely cold or hot a little faster. At this moment, it is crucial to evaluate
the biological and economic advantages of releasing one or the other developmental stages of *C. carnea* to devise efficient methods for introducing the role of various larval stages. By, keeping in view the above facts, field studies were conducted to evaluate the field efficacy of different instars larvae of *C. carnea* against aphids infesting canola plant.

2. Materials and Methods

These experiments were conducted in the research area at Nuclear Institute of Agriculture, Tandojam, Sindh, Pakistan, which is an establishment of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

2.1. Rearing of *Chrysoperla carnea*

The colony of *C. carnea* was primarily established in laboratory from eggs, larvae or adults of predator collected from the field and placed in the climatic control room at 27 ± 2 °C and 60 ± 5 % R.H., at Nuclear Institute of Agriculture, Tandojam. Adults of *C. carnea* were reared in plastic rearing cages feeding on semisolid artificial diet containing yeast, honey and water (1: 1: 1). For rearing of larvae, medium sized (500 mg) gelatin capsules were used as test tube for culturing individually to avoid cannibalism and eggs of *Sitotroga cerealella* (Olivier) (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae) offered as diet for *C. carnea* immatures.

2.2. Experimental technique
The crop *Brassica napus* L. variety ‘Rainbow’ was sown under field conditions in November 2009. Experiment for the release of *C. carnea* larvae was laid out in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD). There were four treatments including control and the treatments were replicated three times. The distance from one experimental field to another was 30 m. Each field was divided into four divisions denoting different treatments. The size of each division in each field was 2.5 m$^2$. The fourth division of each field of field grown cultivar was kept as check. All the standard agronomic practices were followed to raise crop (use of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers, plant spaced 30 cm apart, irrigation done thrice, and no use of synthetic or natural pesticides). Meteorological data (temperature and relative humidity) were also recorded during the observation period.

Same age *C. carnea* larvae (mixed populations of males and females) were released in each replication in canola crop, starting from February to March. Four releases of predator’s 1$^{st}$, 2$^{nd}$ and 3$^{rd}$ instars larvae were made from the time of aphid appearance on canola plant till crop maturity at fortnightly intervals. The predator releases were started against pest ravage early in the flowering season when aphids were present on crop (by counting numbers of pest when there was at least one aphid per leaf) to obtain maximum benefits of pest control. Lacewing larvae were shipped to field in an inert medium carrier (rice hulls) to provide separation, facilitate the proper placement, and uniform field distribution of the predator. For avoiding larval cannibalism, they were kept separately during transit and provided with food comprising eggs of angoumois grain moth *S. cerealella*. Lacewing larvae were released at a rate of 5,000 immatures per acre with a two week intervals to establish a colony in the field. To release 1$^{st}$, 2$^{nd}$ and 3$^{rd}$ instars larvae of predator, simply sprinkled the contents of the container over the pest infested crop or
where aphids were most likely to make an appearance. One by one, or row by row, taped out the
pre-hatched larvae onto the infested plants’ foliage, to insure their disperse evenly among the
infested crops, and avoided placing predators too close to one another to prevent cannibalism.
The influence on aphids due to their C. carnea predators was assessed by examining pest
incidence and effectiveness of the natural enemies in the test field. The data regarding population
monitoring of C. carnea were collected by observing and counting its eggs, larvae and adults 7
days after each predator releases. On each replicate of a treatment, five random samples of plants
were examined to record predator populations. To examine the performance of predator, five
random plants were selected from each treatment, and aphid population was counted on per plant
basis 7 days after each treatment. The data on grain yield were observed at the harvesting time to
determine the role of predators in suppressing pest and enhancing yield of crop. The data were
then converted into per hectare basis with the formula= Yield per plot × 10,000/ Plot size.

2.3. Statistical technique

The data were analyzed by analysis of variance (ANOVA) and means were separated
with least significant difference (LSD) at 0.05% level of significance by using computer software
Statistix 8.1.

3. Results and Discussion

The green peach aphid Myzus persicae was the most abundant pest species in canola at
flowering and podding growth stages of crop. There were no any other insect pests upon that C.
carnea can feed during experiment except aphid pest only. Field releases of C. carnea showed significant reduction in aphid population in predator treated areas. The overall analysis of data showed that predator population in all the treatments differed significantly (P= 0.05) from one another. The untreated plants were severely damaged by aphids, as evidenced by appearance of sooty mold, leaf yellowing and leaf dropping at the end of experiment. The mean meteorological data during the whole period of observations were temperature 13.5 °C (minimum) and 28.5 °C (maximum), and relative humidity 75.5%. Apparently, meteorological data under field experiment throughout the study period might be associated with rise and fall in population of aphids and predation potential of C. carnea.

3.1. Populations of Chrysoperla carnea eggs, larvae and adults

Mean populations of C. carnea (eggs, larvae and adults) were found significant on observations of different treatments (Table 1). Of the different larval stages tested, the best results on predator populations’ occurrence were significantly achieved with biologically managed crop compared with untreated control. On all treatments, population of C. carnea developed, but maximum eggs abundance was recorded in crop where inoculation with 1st instars was practiced (1.66 eggs/ plant). It was statistically dissimilar to applications of 2nd and 3rd instars larvae (1.22 and 0.66 eggs/ plant, respectively), while, eggs number was significantly lower in the control, where no release was made (0.11 eggs/ plant). Treatments receiving 1st, 2nd and 3rd instars of predator larvae had significantly higher larval population of C. carnea (1.55, 1.11 and 0.55, respectively). In contrast, mean population of predator larvae significantly differed in control canola field (0.11). Maximum numbers of adult C. carnea were recorded in
application of 1\textsuperscript{st} instars larvae (0.88) differing significantly from one another followed by 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars (0.36 and 0.18, respectively) compared with non released crop (P= 0.05).

3.2. Populations of aphid and grain yield

The data given in Table 2 show aphids’ populations recorded in different treatments; almost all predator released treatments gave good pest control except untreated control. The mean population data however showed that treatments differed significantly from one another (P= 0.05). Significantly maximum decline in aphid populations over control (74.16 aphids per plant) was noted where application of 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} instars larvae followed by inoculation with 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars of \textit{C. carnea} were adapted (34.50, 47.25 and 60.16 aphids per plant, respectively) in all the releases. The pod yield or grain yield parameter showed significant variations in canola treatments (P= 0.05). Of the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} instars of \textit{C. carnea} released, 1\textsuperscript{st} instars proved the mainly effective treatment resulting in significant increase in grain yield (783.33, 641.67 and 570.00 gm per 2.5 m\textsuperscript{2}, respectively) over control (503.33 gm per 2.5 m\textsuperscript{2}). Increase in crop yield contained by predator applied areas was due to a direct beneficial role played by larvae of \textit{C. carnea} in pest suppression and crop protection.

In the lacewings released fields, adult predator was recorded in higher numbers than in the non-released check. Likewise, \textit{C. carnea} eggs and larvae were also observed in abundance in the predator released fields. The development of the aphid populations was variable both in the released and non-released fields because \textit{C. carnea} larvae fed maximum on pest before they become adults, however, the highest number of aphids per plant, was recorded in the non-
released areas. Of the different larval stages tested, the applications of 1<sup>st</sup> instars followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars larvae were effective in reducing aphid populations and increasing yield compared with untreated control. Clearly, the applications of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> instars larvae of *C. carnea* involved in efficient prey location and consumption, and performed predation activity well for longer period (2-3 weeks). On the other hand, the release of 3<sup>rd</sup> instars larvae was too late to play a direct beneficial role in crop protection suggesting that they may have less time (1 week) to remain involved in efficient prey consumption. Further, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> instars larvae may be more hungrier and thus ate more pests in treated areas without resting or moving to new location, so, can be potentially used to enhance biological control of aphids as compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> instars.

Undoubtedly, during current findings, *C. carnea* larvae proved one of the fastest predators available, and their releasing on plant foliage enhanced their survival. Also, the larvae needed less protection from predation by other arthropods than lacewing eggs. Other predators are able to be attracted to the eggs on the card to eat prey and generally interfere with biological control. The reasons that why pre-hatched larvae of *C. carnea* are the best form of green lacewing for pest control may be because unlike adult predators, they cannot fly away, and thus, can walk far several distance looking for pests and pest eggs. Unlike eggs, pre-hatched larvae are big and strong enough to live for some days and can walk less or more to find food. Unlike putting out lacewing eggs, the pre-hatched larvae are more able to fend off other predators and may survive well in bad weather. Hence, larval releases of lacewings may be more effective in comparison to eggs or adults to decline aphids’ intensity. Gautam and Tesfaye (2002) observed that the predatory potential of the predator *C. carnea* was high in the older instars than the younger ones. The predation efficiency of *C. carnea* from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> instars increased
tremendously (Sattar et al., 2007). But, these evidences are mainly from closed cage laboratory studies. However, the left behind time to pupate, and prey handling and feeding period were some what lower for the third instars than first instars larvae. On the other hand, there was higher prey consumption duration from the younger stage from hatching to pupae formation resulting huge amount of prey devoured. However, lower or higher temperature may have more negative effect on survival of first instars C. carnea than third instars larvae. Further, second and third instars C. carnea larvae may show better survival at fluctuating temperature compared with first instars.

The survey of scientific literature on the use of different larval stages of C. carnea has no enough analogous data available; hence, it is hard to narrate the results of present work with any other studies carried out elsewhere. However, present findings can be compared with the previous work conducted by many workers who stated that applications of biological agents have the potential to control the aphids. Pari et al., (1993) released C. carnea against infestation of aphids (Macrosiphum euphorbiae and Chaetosiphon fragaefolii) at a density of at least 20 larvae/ linear m of each paired row and achieved satisfactory pest control results. Hemagirish et al., (2001) with four releases of C. carnea in the field in equal installments at fortnightly intervals, got satisfactory control of aphid. Ashfaq et al., (2007) studied efficiency of C. carnea against aphid Brevicoryne brassicae infesting canola oil seed crop using treatments comprising release rates of eggs. The egg release rates showed significant effects on aphid population reduction and the treatments were statistically different from one another. Farooq and Tasawar (2008) evaluated various measures for the control of canola pests’ Brevicoryne brassicae and Lipaphis erysimi. The efficiencies of the predators Coccinella septempunctata and C. carnea
when released singly or released together was increased as the releasing period was prolonged and yields were significantly affected in all the treatments. Similar observations were also made in the present findings where release of *C. carnea* showed some significant control of aphids. However, repeated applications of biological agents can produce significant results rather than single release of predators.

The result of studies further revealed that the release of predator not only showed significant control of aphids, but, also increased crop yield as compared to control treatment. The conclusion drawn from the results are that the utilization of biological control agents were proved to be an admiring strategy in an aphids pest management which exerted a direct beneficial role in crop protection ultimately increasing amount of seeds produced. These findings are not in contradicted with those of Iqbal *et al.*, (2008) who also reported similar findings. Releases of *C. carnea* larvae may be more effective and larvae releases were superior for control of the pest and increasing grain yield. The new advances in insectaries for production and dispensing systems of *C. carnea*, may improve the economics of commercial releases of larvae. The predator can provide better control when the plant's leaves are in contact with adjacent plants; so, that contiguous leaf contact improves lacewing dispersal and perhaps might decrease opportunities for cannibalism. It is suggested that 1st instars larvae of *C. carnea* may be effective in reduction aphid density, if this treatment is repeated after every fortnightly interval. Clearly, more field tests using commercially feasible release rates are necessary.

References


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pseudolongispinosus (Xin, Liang and Ke) (Phytoseiidae). Biological Control. 65 (1): 37-42.


Table 1. Populations of different life stages of *Chrysoperla carnea* on Canola *Brassica napus* L.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>C. carnea Eggs/ plant</th>
<th>C. carnea Larvae/ plant</th>
<th>C. carnea Adults/ plant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1(^{st}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>1.66 a</td>
<td>1.55 a</td>
<td>0.88 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2(^{nd}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>1.22 b</td>
<td>1.11 b</td>
<td>0.36 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3(^{rd}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>0.66 c</td>
<td>0.55 c</td>
<td>0.18 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.11 d</td>
<td>0.11 d</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSD Value 0.367 0.439 0.494

Means sharing similar letters are not significantly different by LSD at P= 0.05

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Table 2. The propensity of different larval stages of *Chrysoperla carnea* to control aphids on Canola *Brassica napus* L.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Aphids population/ plant</th>
<th>Yield per 2.5 m(^2) (gm)</th>
<th>Yield per hectare (Kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1(^{st}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>34.50 d</td>
<td>783.33 a</td>
<td>3133.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2(^{nd}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>47.25 c</td>
<td>641.67 b</td>
<td>2566.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3(^{rd}) instars <em>C. carnea</em> larvae applied</td>
<td>60.16 b</td>
<td>570.00 c</td>
<td>2280.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>74.16 a</td>
<td>503.33 d</td>
<td>2013.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSD Value 9.288 49.164

Means sharing dissimilar letters are significantly different by LSD at P= 0.05