

## ***Valanga Nigricornis*, Leaf Eating Pests of Oil Palm and Other Crops – From Biology to Its Management**

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*Adults of Valanga nigricornis (subfamily: Cyrtacanthacridinae; family: Acrididae; order: Orthoptera) are large grasshoppers, with males reaching body lengths of 5–6 cm and females measuring 7–8 cm. Common names include the Javanese grasshopper and Valanga grasshopper, while the Malay name is belalang kunyit. Adult grasshoppers are typically yellowish-brown, yellowish, or green, marked with bluish-black patterns and bearing rose-red hind wings that are visible during flight. Nymphs are wingless, pale green in colour, and exhibit dark markings. The life cycle of V. nigricornis spans approximately four to six months under natural conditions. This includes an incubation period of four to five weeks, nymphal development through about six instars lasting two to three months, and attainment of adult sexual maturity within one month. Under laboratory conditions (mean temperature 27–29°C and 80% relative humidity), the life cycle is extended, lasting between 6.5 and 8.5 months. The adults and nymphs are polyphagous and feed on leaves of many species of plants including several plantation crops, namely oil palm, rubber, cocoa, coconut, sugarcane, garden plants and ornamental plants. Monitoring of pest population is required for timely control, especially since large populations can build up in favourable conditions (usually during the dry years). In an outbreak in immature oil palm planting, 2250 adult Valanga per hectare have been recorded and the leaf area lost ranges from 10 to 25 per cent with more than 35 per cent total leaf area in severely damaged palms. In another outbreak of one-year-old oil palm, the pest population is estimated as 5100 to 6868 Valanga grasshoppers per hectare and spraying of insecticide, for example acephate, gives effective grasshopper control. In dealing with attacks on garden plants, handpicking and other non-chemical methods are usually practised. The identification, biology and pest incidences of V. nigricornis on oil palm, rubber, cocoa and garden plants including their management are briefly discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Valanga nigricornis, leaf-eating pest, oil palm, rubber, cocoa, garden plants, crop damage, control.*

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