The effect of sex and maturation on cuticular semiochemicals in *Monochamus scutellatus* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae)

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Abstract—Contact pheromones are a subset of a complex mixture of hydrocarbons secreted on the cuticle and play an important role in the mating behaviour of several cerambycid species (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae). In this study, we investigated the relationship between maturation (newly eclosed and sexually mature) adult *Monochamus scutellatus* (Say) beetles and sex and the composition of the cuticular hydrocarbon blend to determine if this information is encoded in the blend and potentially available for communication purposes. Whole-body extracts of unfed females, and both mature females and males were analysed by gas chromatography mass spectrometry to identify and quantify the components of the cuticular hydrocarbons. There were no unique compounds present in any of the three groups, but discriminant analysis indicated that the relative proportions of the cuticular hydrocarbon components were unique for each group.

Résumé—Les phéromones de contact sont un sous-ensemble du mélange complexe d'hydrocarbures sécrétés par la cuticule; elles jouent un role important dans le comportement sexuel de plusieurs espèces de cérambycidés. Dans cette étude, nous explorons la relation entre la maturité (récemment éclos ou sexuellement matures), le sexe et la composition du mélange d'hydrocarbones cuticulaires afin de déterminer si ces informations sont contenues dans le mélange et pourraient être utilisées comme élément de communication. Des extractions du corps de femelles non nourries, et de femelles et de mâles matures ont été analysées par CPG/SM afin d'identifier et de quantifier les composants des hydrocarbones cuticulaires. Il n'y avait aucun élément unique à chacun des trois groupes, mais une analyse discriminante montre que la proportion relative des différents hydrocarbones cuticulaires était spécifique à chaque groupe.

Introduction

The white-spotted sawyer, *Monochamus scute-llatus* (Say) (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae), is widely distributed in North America and damage forest resources in several ways. The larvae mine in the cambium, phloem, and xylem of host trees, causing substantial saw-log degradation and economic loss due to the large, deep holes in the xylem and the introduction of wood-staining fungi. For example, cerambycids, including *Monochamus*

Dejean species, cause degradation losses that total \$1.8–4.8 million United States of America dollars (USD) in the province of British Columbia, Canada alone (Allison *et al.* 2001). If these values were extrapolated to encompass all interior mills, annual losses would be \$293 million USD, \$43.6 million USD of which would be attributable to large wood-borers (Allison *et al.* 2001). *Monochamus* species are considered forest pests in other countries where they vector the pinewood nematode, *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*

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(Aphelenchida: Parasitaphelenchidae); the causal agent of pine-wilt disease (Linit 1989; Vallentgoed 1991). Bursaphelenchus xylophilus is indigenous to the United States of America and causes little damage to native North American pine species but has devastated pine forests in eastern Asia (Cram and Hanson 2004) and killed 90% of planted Scots pine, Pinus sylvestris Linnaeus (Pinaceae), in the mid-western United States of America (Gleason et al. 2000). Due to the economic significance of Monochamus species in countries that receive North American softwood products, significant resources have been dedicated to monitoring and controlling these insects in order to protect North American softwood exports. Monitoring strategies based on chemical attractants are generally efficient and cost-effective, but have not yet been developed for M. scutellatus.

Semiochemicals in the cuticular wax layer of insects have important roles communicating information about species, sex, and kinship (Blomquist et al. 1996; Howard and Blomquist 2005). Cuticular waxes are composed of complex mixtures that may include long-chain fatty acids, methyl esters, aliphatic alcohols, aldehydes, ketones, and hydrocarbons, which also protect the organism from desiccation (Edney 1967; Neville 1975; Jackson and Blomquist 1976; Gibbs 1998). The hydrocarbon composition of the insect cuticle is not constant throughout the lifespan of an insect and can change due to the environment or physiological factors, including but not limited to age, ovarian activity, or nutritional condition and habitat (Dillwith et al. 1983; Wakonigg et al. 2000; D'Ettorre et al. 2006). Males of many species increase their probability of successfully mating by choosing mates based on the females' reproductive status (Thomas 2011).

Behavioural studies of cerambycid beetles showed that contact cuticular hydrocarbons play an important role in mate recognition (Hanks *et al.* 1996; Ginzel and Hanks 2003). Male longhorn beetles locate females on bark or foliage of host trees using other cues, and then use cuticular hydrocarbons and contact chemoreception to recognise the female as a potential mate. This behavioural mechanism has been documented in the subfamilies Prioninae (Barbour *et al.* 2007; Spikes *et al.* 2010), Cerambycinae (Ginzel and Hanks 2003), and Lamiinae (Wang 1998; Ginzel and Hanks 2003; Zhang *et al.* 2003). Components of the contact sex pheromones may be unique to the wax layer of females (Ginzel *et al.* 2003a, 2003b; Lacey *et al.* 2008), or alternatively, the uniqueness may be encoded as sexual dimorphism in the relative abundance of a subset of the cuticular hydrocarbons (Howard and Blomquist 2005).

Here, we test the hypothesis that cuticular hydrocarbons encode information about sex and maturation status of females in M. scutellatus. Specifically, our objectives were: (1) to determine if information about sex and maturation is encoded as unique components in the hydrocarbon blends and (2) to determine if information about sex and maturation is encoded in the relative proportions of cuticular hydrocarbons.

Materials and methods

Collection and rearing

Red pine, *Pinus resinosa* Soland (Pinaceae), infested with *M. scutellatus* larvae were felled at Pratts Falls County Park in Pompey, New York, United States of America in September 2005 and logs were transported to the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) and stored at 4.5°C for 2 months to force larvae into diapause. Logs were then placed in emergence chambers at \sim 23°C.

Adult beetles emerged after 2–4 weeks and were placed in environmental chambers at 20–24°C with a 16:8 light/dark photoperiod. The date and sex of each beetle were recorded upon emergence. Beetles were allowed to feed on white pine, *Pinus strobus* Linnaeus (Pinaceae), shoots for \sim 1 week in environmental chambers before they were extracted.

Extraction of cuticular hydrocarbons

Cuticular hydrocarbons were individually extracted in pentane by the method of Ginzel *et al.* (2003b). Unfed females were separately extracted within 1 day of emergence with no access to food. We individually extracted cuticular hydrocarbons of three groups of virgin beetles: maturation-fed females (n = 20), unfed females (n = 18), and maturation-fed males (n = 20) of *M. scutellatus*.

Hydrocarbon identification

Cuticular hydrocarbon samples were analysed with a gas chromatography mass spectrometry (Series II 5890 gas chromatograph and HP 5971 MSD, Hewlett Packard, Palo Alto, California, United States of America) with the temperature program at 40°C for 1 minute, then 10°C/minute to 300°C for 10 minutes. Injector and quadrupole mass spectrometer detector temperatures were 300°C and 280°C, respectively. Electron impact (70 eV) mass spectra were obtained with a scan range of 40–500 m/z. For each sample analysis, a 1.0 µl aliquot was injected. Samples were also analysed using chemical ionisation mass spectrometry with isobutene (Hewlett Packard Model 5989B GC/MS, Agilent, Santa Clara, California, United States of America) under the same temperature program as described above. In comparing the ratio of both maturation-fed females and unfed females an internal standard of heptadecane was used to quantify hydrocarbons.

Data analyses

The relative quantities of cuticular hydrocarbons of maturation-fed males, fed females, and unfed females were analysed using discriminant analysis to determine if the hydrocarbon signatures of the three treatment groups were distinct. Statistical analyses were performed using program Statistica (Statsoft, Inc., Tulsa, Oklahoma, United States of America). Structure coefficients (correlations between the discriminating variables and the discriminate groups) were used to assess the importance of individual compounds in the different groups. To avoid limitations inherent to the analysis of compositional data, peak areas were transformed prior to the analysis using the formula of Aitchinson (1986):

$$Z_{ij} = \ln\left[\frac{Y_{ij}}{g(Y_j)}\right],$$

where Z_{ij} is the transformed area of peak *i* for beetle *j*; Y_{ij} is the area of peak *i* for beetle *j*; and $g(Y_j)$ is the geometric mean of the areas of all peaks for beetle *j* (Aitchinson 1986; Steiner *et al.* 2007). Peeters *et al.* (1999) reduced the number of compounds by excluding peaks with small relative amounts. However, relative peak sizes may not be an appropriate selection criterion as small peaks have the potential to encode information. Rather, peaks with the highest variation between treatment groups should be identified and included. Selection of peaks for this analysis was based on the Kruskal–Wallis test statistic H (Zar 1996). H-values were calculated for each compound and compounds with the highest H-values, those exhibiting the highest inter-group variability, were chosen and included (Steiner *et al.* 2007) in the discriminant analysis. Eighteen compounds were selected based on the H-values from the original 33 peaks that occurred regularly in the samples of all three groups (totalling 58 individuals). Four additional compounds were also included as univariate *t*-test comparisons of peak areas for these compounds from maturation-fed male and female beetles were significantly different (P < 0.05).

Results

Hexane extracts of female and male *M. scute-llatus* consisted principally of saturated and unsaturated hydrocarbons, and there were consistent, sex-specific differences in male and female hydrocarbon total ion chromatograms (Table 1, Fig. 1). While the same compounds appeared in both male and female extracts, there were significant differences in relative quantity between the two sexes (one-tailed *t*-test, P < 0.05) in the two C₂₅ monoenes, the methyl-branched C₂₅, nC₂₆, the two C₂₇ monoenes, and nC₂₇ (Table 2). C₂₈ monoene was a dominant compound in males, and there were no compounds that were specific to males or females (Table 1, Fig. 1).

There were significantly different relative amounts of 20 hydrocarbons in the cuticular extracts of *M. scutellatus* of different sex and feeding status (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.062$, $F_{34,78} = 196.943$; P < 0.00001). Discriminant analysis showed that the first root separates all three groups, while the second root separates fed females from the other two groups (Fig. 2). Although the majority of hydrocarbons are present in both groups of females, the quantity is approximately four times greater in maturation-fed females than in unfed females (Table 1, Fig. 1). During maturation, some cuticular hydrocarbons may be produced in a high quantity, and it is very possible that new cuticular hydrocarbons are produced.

Discussion

Chemical communication a very old and widespread form of communication (Wyatt 2003).

Ret. indices

bublishec	2	2400	0.03827 ± 0.0020	0.0071 ± 0.0238	0.0008 ± 0.0014	IIC_{24}
lishec	2	2467		0 0016 1 0 0001	0 0011 1 0 0010	a p'
ec	a. d. d.	2407	0.0003 ± 0.0013	0.0016 ± 0.0034	0.0011 ± 0.0013	C_{25} Diene
-	3**	2473	0.0016 ± 0.0027	0.0050 ± 0.0048	0.0028 ± 0.0002	C_{25} Monoene ₁
onli	4**	2481	0	0.0021 ± 0.0034	0.0010 ± 0.0002	C ₂₅ Monoene ₂
ne t	5	2500	0.1469 ± 0.0562	0.1740 ± 0.0492	0.0243 ± 0.0001	nC ₂₅
y Q	6	2534	0.0163 ± 0.0067	0.0178 ± 0.0073	0.0021 ± 0.0033	11-MeC ₂₅
am						13-MeC ₂₅
bric	7**	2576	0.0155 ± 0.0088	0.0235 ± 0.0095	0.0024 ± 0.0024	3-MeC ₂₅
lge	8**	2600	0.0137 ± 0.0058	0.0184 ± 0.0051	0.0086 ± 0.0045	nC ₂₆
Uni	9	2637	0.0050 ± 0.0074	0.0035 ± 0.0049	0.0005 ± 0.0094	Unknown
vers	10	2663	0.0136 ± 0.0098	0.0146 ± 0.0091	0.0070 ± 0.0021	2-MeC ₂₆
έζ.	11	2668	0.0123 ± 0.0134	0.0126 ± 0.0141	0.0013 ± 0.0010	C ₂₇ Diene
ores	12*	2675	0.0061 ± 0.0100	0.0150 ± 0.0157	0.0004 ± 0.0006	C ₂₇ Monoene ₁
či S	13**	2680	0.0047 ± 0.0081	0.0197 ± 0.0133	0.0039 ± 0.0001	C27 Monoene2
	14**	2700	0.1487 ± 0.0513	0.1991 ± 0.0297	0.0599 ± 0.0094	nC ₂₇
	15	2734	0.0763 ± 0.0346	0.0904 ± 0.0007	0.0100 ± 0.0130	11-MeC ₂₅
						13-MeC ₂₅
	16	2763	0.0153 ± 0.0141	0.0111 ± 0.0092	0.0014 ± 0.0042	13-MeC ₂₇
						15-MeC ₂₇
						17-MeC ₂₇
	17	2776	0.0776 ± 0.0299	0.0801 ± 0.0259	0.0067 ± 0.0013	3-MeC ₂₇
0 2	18	2800	0.0179 ± 0.0083	0.0249 ± 0.0242	0.0018 ± 0.0008	nC ₂₈
01:	19	2810	0.0141 ± 0.0098	0.0166 ± 0.0088	0.0008 ± 0.0013	10-MeC ₂₆
E E						14-MeC ₂₆
nto	20	2863	0.0081 ± 0.0084	0.0084 ± 0.0076	0.0005 ± 0.0004	2-MeC ₂₈
mo	21*	2882	0.0183 ± 0.0419	0.0126 ± 0.0165	0.0032 ± 0.0027	C ₂₈ Monoene
log	22	2900	0.0908 ± 0.0394	0.0759 ± 0.0303	0.0127 ± 0.0001	nC ₂₉
ical	23	2938	0.0463 ± 0.0217	0.0413 ± 0.0185	0.0043 ± 0.0003	11-MeC ₂₉
S						13-MeC ₂₉
ocie						15-MeC ₂₉
Ŷ	24	2949	0.0421 ± 0.0006	0.0227 ± 0.0304	0.0190 ± 0.0012	10-MeC ₂₉
of	25	2978	0.0339 ± 0.0124	0.0287 ± 0.0104	0.0095 ± 0.0073	3-MeC ₂₉
្ន						

Male

Table 1. Relative quantities of cuticular hydrocarbons from female and male Monochamus scutellatus after 14 days of maturation feeding.

% Area \pm SE

Female

Unfed females

Hydrocarbon

Diagnostic ions

338 (M+)

348 (M+)

350 (M+)

350 (M+)

352 (M+)

376 (M+)

378 (M+)

378 (M+)

380 (M+)

366 (M+), 168, 224

380 (M+), 365, 337

379 (M-15), 168, 252

379 (M-15), 196, 224

379 (M-15), 168, 196

379 (M-15), 239 379 (M-15), 267

394 (M-15), 365

394 (M+), 127, 155 394 (M+), 224

408 (M+), 365, 393

406 (M+), 83, 97, 111

422 (M+), 168, 280/282

422 (M+), 196, 252

422 (M+), 155, 253

422 (M+), 407, 393

394 (M+)

408 (M+)

422 (M+), 224

366 (M+), 196

366 (M+), 337 366 (M+)

Fig. 1. Representative total ion chromatograms of hexane extracts of representative virgin, maturation fed, and unfed adult females, and virgin, maturation fed, adult male *Monochamus scutellatus*. Numbered peaks are sexually dimorphic compounds found in Table 1. Females are of varying ages: unfed are <1 day, 2 days and fed are aged 2 weeks and 1 month.



Males of many species increase their probability of successfully mating by choosing mates based on the females' reproductive status (Thomas 2011). One of the ways males discriminate is by using female reproduction status cues, such as female age, as a proxy. For example, male bushcrickets (Requena verticalis Walker; Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae), can differentiate females based on their age and preferentially mates with younger females (Simmons *et al.* 1994). By choosing young females, males reduce the probability of copulating with mated females, thereby increasing

Table 2. Degrees of freedom and test value for onetailed *t*-test of hydrocarbons Z9:C₂₅, Z7:C₂₅, 3-MeC₂₅, nC_{26} , Z9:C₂₇, Z7:C₂₇, nC_{27} , Z9:C₂₈, and (P = 0.05).

Peak number ^a	DF	$P(T \le t)$ one-tail	Hydrocarbon
3**	37	0.0030	C_{25} monoene ₁
4**	23	0.0026	C_{25} monoene ₂
7**	38	0.0038	MeC ₂₅
8**	34	0.0049	nC ₂₆
12*	39	0.0155	C ₂₇ monoene ₁
13**	39	0.0000	C ₂₇ monoene ₂
14**	25	0.0005	nC ₂₇
21*	30	0.0070	C ₂₈ monoene

^a Peak numbers correspond to those in Figure 1.

*P < 0.05 and **P < 0.005 for sexually dimorphic compounds.

the likelihood that they will sire offspring. However, it is not clear if odour is used as the cue to discriminate female ages in this species. An example where age-dependent chemical signals have been demonstrated and, most likely, used by males is in *Drosophila virilis* (Sturtevant) (Diptera: Drosophilidae). In this case, the average chain length of hydrocarbons decreases with age (Jackson and Bartelt 1986).

Our analysis of *M. scutellatus* male and female cuticular hydrocarbons indicates that hydrocarbons are sexually dimorphic (Table 2 and Fig. 1). Some or all of these compounds may be contact pheromones used for mate recognition, as in other cerambycids (Hanks 1999; Ginzel and Hanks 2003; Ginzel *et al.* 2003a, 2003b; Barbour *et al.* 2007).

This investigation demonstrates that in *M. scute-llatus*, maturation feeding is associated with a change in the relative proportion of cuticular hydrocarbons in females. The majority of compounds found were the same in maturation-fed females compared with unfed females; however, there were significant differences in the quantities and ratios of these compounds (Fig. 1). These beetles have a required maturation-feeding period of 7 days (Rose 1957) prior to mating, and our observations indicate that beetles do not discriminate the sexes until maturation feeding has occurred.

The sexually dimorphic compounds that show highly significant differences between males and females (Table 2) are likely contact pheromones for *M. scutellatus*. Due to their

Fig. 2. *Monochamus scutellatus* males (open squares), females (solid diamonds), and newly emerged females (open circles) clustered in distinct groups based on discriminate analysis of 18 cuticular hydrocarbons isolated from 58 beetles. Ellipses represent 95% confidence limits.



molecular weight they may have potential to be somewhat volatile and thus, may act as close range pheromones. Additionally, some of these same compounds have also been identified as contact sex pheromones in other cerambycid species. For example, (Z)-9-pentacosene has been identified as a contact pheromone in both the locust borer, *Megacyllene robiniae* (Ginzel *et al.* 2003), and the Asian longhorn beetle, *Anoplophora glabripennis* (Motschulsky) (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) (Zhang *et al.* 2003). One of the known contact pheromones of the rustic borer, *Xylotrechus colonus* (Fabricius) (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae), is 3-methylpentacosane (Ginzel *et al.* 2003a).

The ontogenetic changes in cuticular hydrocarbons in social insects have been widely studied. In these insects, factors such as habitat and nutritional conditioning induce changes in cuticular hydrocarbon composition. A few examples include the arrangement of hydrocarbons revealing agerelated changes in honey-bee drones (Wakonigg *et al.* 2000), vespid wasps (Panek *et al.* 2001), and ants (Cuvillier-Hot *et al.* 2001). However, similar changes in ontogenic variation in cuticular hydrocarbon compositions in non-social organisms have yet to be addressed and are currently poorly understood. Investigating these mechanisms may provide important information regarding non-social insects' ecology and communication pathways.

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