

**PRESENCE OF THE STORAGE SEED PROTEIN IN INTERNAL ORGANS OF
LARVAL BRUCHIDS *ACANTHOSCELIDES OBTECTUS*,
CALLOSOBRUCHUS MACULATUS AND *ZABROTES SUBFASCIATUS***

Adriana F. Uchôa¹; Sheila M. Souza²; Antônia Elenir A. Oliveira²; Kátia V. S. Fernandes²; Carlos P. Silva²; José Xavier-Filho²

¹ Departamento de Biologia Celular e Genética, CB-UFRN, Natal-RN
²LQFPP-CBB-UENF, Campos-RJ

Variant vicilins (7S storage globulins) of cowpea seeds (*Vigna unguiculata*) are considered as the main resistance factor present in some African genotypes against the bruchid *Callosobruchus maculatus*. It has been suggested that the toxic properties of vicilins may be related to their recognition and interaction with glycoproteins and other membrane constituents along the digestive tract of the insect. However, the possibility of a systemic effect has not yet been investigated. The objective of this work was to study the fate of vicilins of *V. unguiculata*, *Phaseolus vulgaris* and *P. lunatus* in internal organs of larvae and adults of three important bruchid pests, the cowpea weevil *C. maculatus*, the Mexican bean weevil *Zabrotes subfasciatus* and the common bean weevil *Acanthoscelides obtectus*. The internalisation of vicilins and their presence in insect tissues were observed by using SDS-PAGE, ELISA and Western blotting. Vicilins were detected in the haemolymph and in the fat body in the three bruchid species. Binding of vicilins to microvilli appeared to lead to their transport across the gut cells by transcytosis, followed by circulation throughout the haemolymph and deposition in the fat body.

Supported by: FAPERJ; CNPq and UENF .

Key words: Vicilin, bruchids, haemolymph, fat body.