COMMELINACEAE

(28) *Rhoeo discolor* Hance

Known as "Oyster Plant" or "Ladies-in-a-Boat", this plant is primarily terrestrial, (and may be seen growing in the Gardens along the pathways) but occasionally it grows on trees, such as a large saman near Government House. It is readily recognized by its sword-shaped leaves, about a foot long, dark green above and purple beneath. The small white flowers are encased between a pair of purple bracts which are shaped like oyster shells (hence the common names) and are half concealed among the leaf bases.

FERNS

Several species of ferns (native and exotic) are to be seen growing on the trees. Unfortunately I am in a position to say little about them. One that is readily recognized is, however, the tiny *Polypodium polypodioides* (Linné) Watt which grows in dense clumps, creeping between the rugosities of the bark of the samans as well as several other trees. The leathery leaves are about 5 inches long (including stem) with the margins deeply disected into about a dozen lobes. During dry weather the leaves curl up and wither but expand again when moisture becomes available. A much larger creeping fern, quite possibly *Polypodium aureum* Linné, may be seen high up in the samans. The leaves (including stems) reach a length of about 3 feet and are about a foot across at the base and cut up into about a dozen or more deep serrations reaching to the midrib.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am extremely grateful to Mr. N. W. Simmonds a botanist at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, St. Augustine, for kindly reading and criticising the manuscript.

SHORT NOTES AND ISOLATED OBSERVATIONS

Feeding habits of *Pseudoboa*.

ON 28th April 1957 I put five small *Atractus trilineatus* in a cage with a *Pseudoboa coronatus* (about 14 inches long). At 10.11 a.m. the *Pseudoboa* seized the largest *Atractus* which was about 5 inches long and put five coils around it, got its head at 10.21 after feeling around for it, then swallowed it in 4½ minutes. At 10.26 a.m. the *Pseudoboa* took a second *Atractus* which was a much smaller one and swallowed it immediately, got the third by its tail 30 second after and swallowed that, then took the fourth at 10.32. Each of the three smaller *Atractus* was swallowed in 25 seconds.

On 29th April, Mr. H. P. Urich gave me a *Pseudoboa neuwiedii* about 3 feet long. I put it in the cage with the smaller *Pseudoboa*. The next day the larger one swallowed the smaller, then disgorged, killing it.

On 7th May the *Pseudoboa neuwiedii* on seeing a mouse that I had placed in the cage, started to chase it, seemed to get excited and disgorged a mouse that it had eaten the day before, then swallowed it again. It looked around for the live mouse, disgorged again but did not reswallow. At 9.39 a.m. the mouse

fell on the snake and was promptly taken, but the snake did not seem able to find the head to start swallowing. It killed the mouse and relaxed its coils at 10.46 a.m. but did not eat the dead mouse till after nightfall.

On 31st July another *Pseudoboa neuwiedii* was brought to me and I put it in a cage with a *Leptodeira annulata*. Anticipating what would happen I measured both snakes and found that the *Pseudoboa* was just over 3 feet and the *Leptodeira* 22 inches long Next day I found that the *Pseudoboa* had swallowed the *Leptodeira* during the night.

L. WEHEKIND

Egg laying in *Imantodes cenchoa* **and** *Leptodeira annulaia.*

On 27th July 1957 at 9.08 a.m. I went to feed a captive specimen of *Imantodes cenchoa* and found it in the act of laying. The egg had just appeared at the vent and 5 minutes later it had emerged completely.

At 9.31 a.m. a slight contraction passing along the body showed that a second egg would be laid. The times of all subsequent contractions and the duration of each were noted. From 9.32 to 9.37 there were found contractions each lasting 15 seconds and at 9.43 one, lasting 20 seconds. From 9.44 to 10.09 there were 13 contractions of 10 to 15 seconds except the one at 10.07 which lasted 30 seconds. At 10.10 the egg was seen to be approaching the vent. There were seven further contractions, the longest being 50 seconds, and at 10.19 the egg appeared at the vent. The egg had completely emerged 45 seconds later.

During the whole procedure the snake remained wedged in between the drinking trough and the side of the cage and she stayed in this position until nightfall, paying no attention to the newly-laid eggs. Some leaf mould was placed in the cage but she made no attempt to cover the eggs with it. The eggs were later placed in damp leaf mould but did not hatch.

During the night of 14th August 1957 a *Leptodeira annulata* laid four eggs in the drinking trough where she remained throughout the following day. The eggs measured 28 x 10 mm, 26 x 11 mm, 27 x 11mm and 27 x 10 mm. They, too, were placed in leaf mould but did not hatch.

L. WEHEKIND

Terrestrial Amphipod Crustaceans from Trinidad

THIS report concerns a group of shore-dwelling amphipod crustaceans, commonly called beach fleas or sand hoppers, of world-wide tropical and warm-temperate distribution. These animals were probably among the first marine creatures attempting to colonize the land and are among the most primitive of existing terrestrial arthropods. As previous knowledge of the talitrid fauna of the Caribbean region is very imperfect, and that of Trinidad nil, the present records are noteworthy. *Orchestia platensis* Kr. (eastern Canada to Argentina) and *Talorchestia sulensoni* Stebb. (originally described from Madeira) are herewith recorded for the first time from Trinidad, and the latter for the first time from America. Careful search of other types of beaches, particularly in estuaries and mangrove swamps would undoubtedly yield additional interesting species.

Material (all from Trinidad, B.W.I.) :
Orchestia platensis Kroyer 1844.