

**COMPARISON OF TWO SPECIES OF ASCID
MITES AS A FOOD SOURCE FOR *Neoseiulus baraki*,
A PREDATORY MITE OF COCONUT MITE,**

Aceria guerreronis

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ABSTRACT

The coconut mite, *Aceria guerreronis* Keifer (Acari: Eriophyidae) is a serious pest in coconut cultivation in Sri Lanka. Release of laboratory-reared *Neoseiulus baraki* mites at 5000 per palm in 3-4 month intervals to a quarter of the plantation is the interim recommendation to control the pest mite. *Tyrophagus putrescentiae* (Acari: Acaridae) has been used to mass produce *N. baraki*, and another *Tyrophagus* species has been occasionally observed in those cultures. The current study evaluated *T. putrescentiae* and the new *Tyrophagus* species to determine their suitability for mass production of *N. baraki*. Both *Tyrophagous* spp. showed equal effect on the fecundity, durations of life stages, longevity and the sex ratio of *N. baraki*. Therefore, this study shows the possibility of using both *T. putrescentiae* and the new *Tyrophagus* sp. to enhance the mass production of *N. baraki*, for the proper execution of the interim recommendation by Coconut Research Institute to control the coconut mite.

Key words: *Aceria guerreronis*, *Neoseiulus baraki*, *Tyrophagus putrescentiae*, biological control, mass production