

INTRODUCTION



The coconut (Cocos nucifera Linn.) is one of the important agricultural crops of Thailand. Among the most serious of the pests are the coconut beetles. They are presumed to be native to southern India, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, and Indonesia as far east as Celebes, Ceram, and Ambosia. In addition to the coconut palm, the adult beetle feeds in most other kinds of palms and in sugar cane, pine apple, Pandanus, Agave, banana, and probably in taro and some large succulent plants. The adult beetle flies at night, it bores into the bases of unopened leaves in the crowns of coconut palms. When the growing point is damaged the tree ceases to grow and bear fruit, and its injury is often followed by the attack of the red palm weevil (Paul, 1929).

Much has been published about the taxonomic study of the coconut beetle in many parts of the world, but in Thailand only one paper under the title "A key to the Siamose genera and species of coconut beetles." was published by Wattanapongsiri in 1959. This paper is mainly concerned with description and taxonomic work of coconut beetles and weevils of Thailand. There are some Thai literatures that have been

published dealing with biology or the method of controlling the insects, so there is a demand for more information. The writer has reviewed the literatures and attempted to make this study as complete as possible with limitation of time. Emphasis is on the taxonomic characters of the various stages of the beetle in the genus Oryctes. Some taxonomists treat these two species of coconut beetles as one. Therefore the comparative study of the specific taxonomic characters of these beetles is needed in order to clarify the taxonomic position of the species.