Lemon grass

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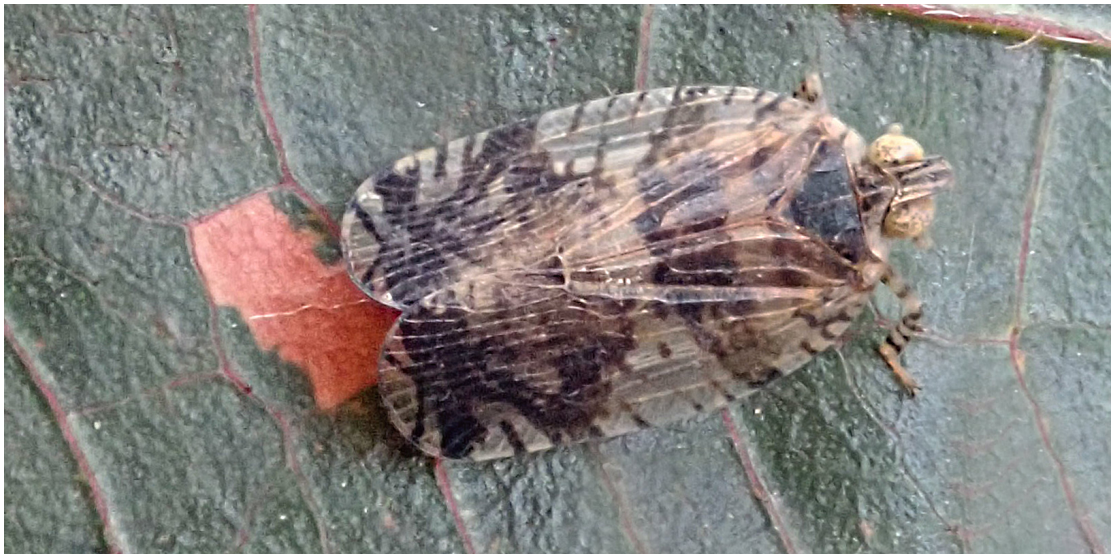
Lemon grass, *Cymbopogon citratus* in Latin, is a tropical grass that thrives in good soil with plenty of water. It even grows quite well in northern New Zealand, which does not have winter frosts but is cold compared to here (Thailand).

The base of long stems are cut and used in cooking.

We replace our plants by splitting up a clump every few months. Most insects leave them alone. Citronella, the oil extracted from the leaves by steam distillation, is toxic and used as a natural mosquito repellant, but there are two sap-sucking plant hoppers that we find on our lemongrass and nowhere else.

Elasmoscelis perforate: we find it only on Lemongrass.

This one (above) is the only member of the *Lophopidae* family that we've seen in Pathum Thani, but we did find a related species on a quite different plant in Taton on the Myanmar border (below).



Perforate spend their lives sitting on Lemongrass leaves sucking sap. If we look carefully on a plant we might find two or three at any one time.

We might also find a few nymphs (juveniles), which have no wings, long tail extensions, and look very different from the adults. They grow and molt five times before they reach adulthood.

Juvenile plant hopper (Elasmoscelis perforate) on Lemongrass (above) and an early instar (below) with shorter tail extensions.

The second sap-sucking plant hopper found only on Lemongrass is a 6 mm Delphacid.

If we shake a plant onto a white tray we usually find at least two or three of these. They have a spur on the tibias of the hind legs, which identifies them as a member of the *Delphacidae* family.

Juveniles (not shown) look like the adults without wings.

A possible predator?

We find 9-11 mm unidentified bugs (below) when we shake lemongrass leaves that are trailing on the ground. We find them nowhere else in the garden and do not know why they are attracted to Lemon grass.

Lemongrass hosts small numbers of resident insects and we don't find spiders or Assassin bugs hunting on the leaves, but occasionally Lynx spiders do take advantage of the almost insect free environment to lay and guard eggs.