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Use of an Artificial Diet for Rearing the Mimosa Clearwing Moth, *Carmenta mimosa*

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Larvae of *Carmenta mimosa* (Lepidoptera: Sesiidae) usually complete their development within woody stems of *Mimosa pigra* plants. Rearing this biological control agent in sufficient numbers to make effective field releases can be very expensive in labour and materials. A single larva can kill a potted plant, and the use of cut stems necessitates a weekly stem change for the duration of the 6 wk larval stage. A meridic diet was developed for this insect which overcomes these problems. Although not readily acceptable to neonate larvae, the diet can be used to rear mid-instar larvae through to pupation and emergence of adults. Larvae reared in this way suffer a lower mortality rate than those reared on cut *M. pigra* stems. Shadehouse space and handling time is less than that required by the methods previously used to rear *C. mimosa*, thus enabling more moths to be reared/hr. Transportation and release of larvae is facilitated, as the use of the diet reduces the possibility of shipment contamination by pathogens or parasites, and larval damage or desiccation.