

## NATIONAL NEWS



Heaps of coconut husk are said to be the main cause of the mass reproduction of black fungus gnats

# Researchers release results of study on black fungus gnats



A scientist experimenting with one of the trapping methods

Results of a research on the black fungus gnats in Seychelles carried out by a group of scientists and researchers were released last week.

Molecular biological investigations have shown that the gnats belonging to the genus *Lobosciara* are found throughout the equator.

Using six different insect trapping methods, the scientists were able to find out that the gnats' habitat is closely linked to coconut trees. Among other things, the larvae live on dead coconut palms in the coastal forest and feed on the fungal mycelium that grows there.

They can reproduce particularly well in heaps of coconut husk. Such material is often used in garden design. The heaps of this material deposited in urban areas and other coconut waste are therefore considered to be the main cause of the mass reproduction of black fungus gnats.

Scientists have also identified a number of natural enemies, such as various predatory fly species that feed on black

fungus gnats. However, the regular use of synthetic insecticides decimates these natural enemies and disturbs the natural balance.

The removal of coconut waste from urban areas is therefore an important measure to reduce the gnats. The waste could be collected, shredded and composted centrally, to produce for example new raw materials for agriculture.

The research conducted in Seychelles was funded by His Highness, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy commander of the UAE Armed Force. It was carried out by a group of scientists along with researchers from Senckenberg, German Entomological Institute, Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants (JKI) and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in collaboration with the National Biosecurity Agency (NBA).

Further cooperation between the NBA and the German research institutes is being pursued.

## YOUR HOROSCOPE

April 1, 2019

### Aries (March 21 - April 19)

You've been hurt before and could be again if you don't play hard to get. Organize all the responsibilities that have to be attended to and make sure everyone knows what to do. Travel for business or pleasure. You need to look into new philosophies.

### Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Uncertainties about your personal life are probable. A change of attitude has probably disrupted your home environment. Attend seminars that will bring you in contact with the right people. You can make excellent purchases this week.

### Gemini (May 21 - June 21)

Do what you can but don't jeopardize your health trying to please everyone. You may have personal problems, but professional duties might be pressing. Don't neglect these problems; deal with them once and for all, then move on to more pleasurable tasks. Get help to finish a project if you need it.

### Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

Try to be reasonable. Be careful not to consume too many spicy foods, or minor health problems could put you out of commission for the day. Take care of any pressing health problems. Look into family outings or projects.

### Leo (July 23 - August 22)

Residential moves will also be advantageous for all concerned. If you put your energy into physical outlets you will avoid confrontations. Job changes are in order. Go for interviews or send out resumes. Use your head and do things to your liking.

### Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

If you work in conjunction with someone else you may find they're trying to steal your thunder. You may find yourself in the limelight for the wrong reasons. Romance will develop through work related activities. You can expect opposition at work. Don't let your competition be privy to information that could be in incriminating.

### Libra (September 23 - October 22)

Don't fall for damaging rumours, and refuse to get involved in gossip. Partnerships will be favorable and contracts can be signed. You should look into a healthier diet. Your desire for excitement and adventure may be expensive.

### Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

Love could develop with someone of a different cultural background. Don't promise to deliver the goods if you aren't positive that you can meet the deadline. You can learn valuable information if you listen and observe what others are doing and saying. Don't overload your plate.

### Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

You can have an enjoyable time if you socialize with friends. You won't have to look for the action. Make sure that you have covered yourself legally and try not to let your temper get out of hand. Go with the flow and don't let the unsettled atmosphere get on your nerves.

### Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

Don't overspend or give too freely to others. Make any decisions you have to in order to avoid feeling unsettled. You may find yourself changing plans for some form of entertainment. Your partner will blow situations out of proportion.

### Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

Relationships will be erratic this week. Take your time before making personal decisions. Don't make large purchases unless you have discussed your choices with your mate. Your dynamic, determined approach will win favours as well as a helping hand.

### Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

Business partnerships should turn out to be quite lucrative. Be careful not to show your temper when dealing with the boss. You should be promoting your ideas. Find out all you can secret enemies may lead you astray.

## Nekton expedition going well

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expeditions dives done by both international and local scuba divers on the expedition team, along with scuba divers from conservation groups and research staff of the islands visited.

The whole expedition is being filmed and footage transmitted and reported worldwide through the British Sky News and the Associated Press as well as the American ABC news channel (Good morning America), Youtube, the internet, Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) and other forms of media.

PS De Commarmond was able to connect live to the chief expedition director, Oliver Steeds and local explorer Sheena Talma via his smart phone on Friday afternoon where the press was able to experience the expedition.

Mr Steeds said everything found up to now is a surprise as it is the first time that anyone had seen anything that lies below the surface such as the different types of corals, layers of salinity which could indicate fresh water coming out of Aldabra, among others.

He noted the very strong current in our waters and added that the team has to work hard to overcome the many challenges linked to the expedition, especially the con-

trol of the submersibles and very deep live screening on the seabed.

As for Ms Talma who joined to expedition team on Wednesday from the Aldabra clean-up campaign, she said the wonders down below in the waters of Astove is beyond her imagination and that she will cherish it for a long time. She experienced her first 60 metres submersible dive on Thursday.



PS De Commarmond speaking chief expedition director Oliver Steeds and local explorer Sheena Talma via his smart phone

