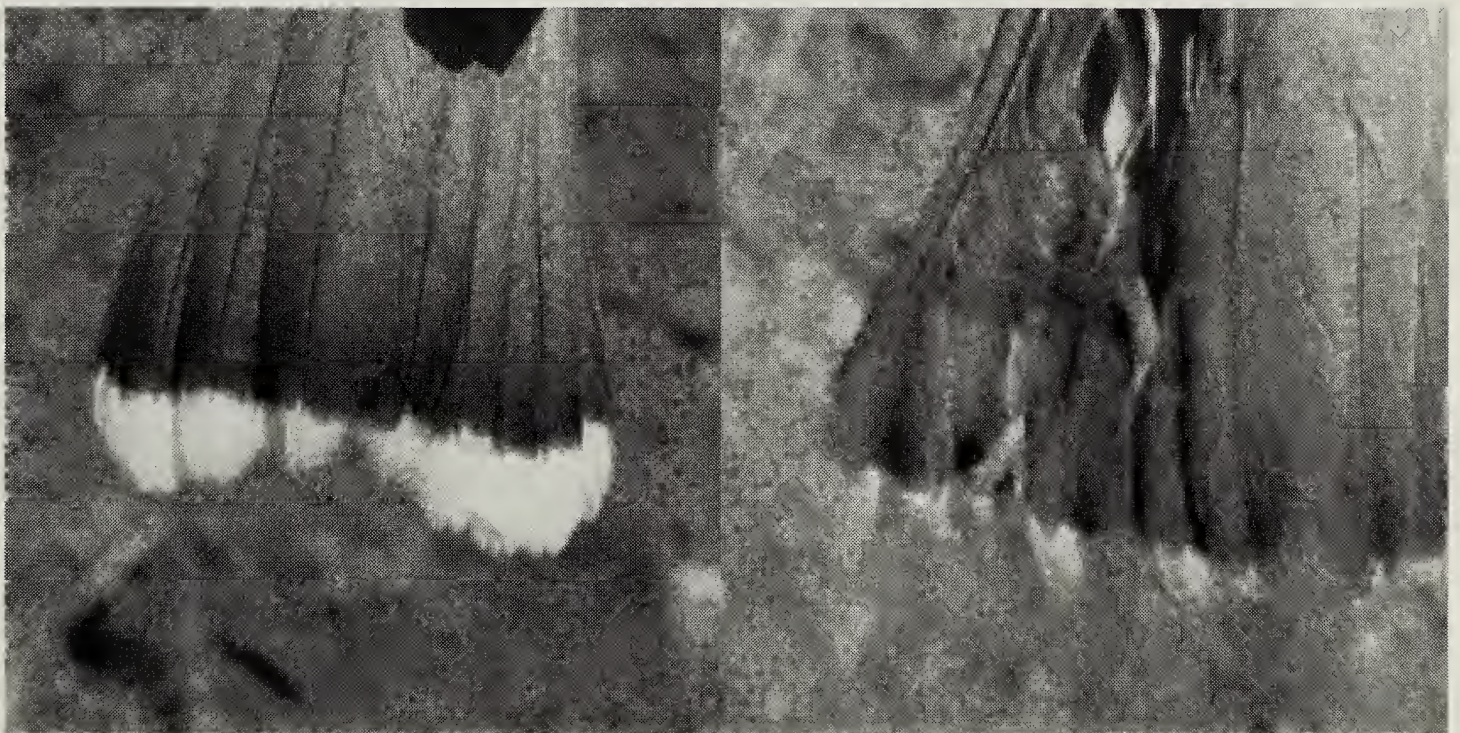

NOTES and LETTERS

CEDAR WAXWINGS WITH ORANGE TAIL TIPS

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All Cedar Waxwings have yellow tail tips, don't they? If a waxwing eats fruit from a Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*) as its incoming tail feathers are growing (in this case a young bird), red carotenoid pigment (rhodoxathin) is deposited in the cells and the tail tip is orange. This phenomenon was not seen before

the 1950s when this honeysuckle was sold by nurseries. The waxwings and robins eat the fruit and then drop the seeds across the countryside. It is now an invasive species across eastern North America.



Cedar Waxwing tails - typical (left) with red pigment (right). Colour images inside back cover.
- Ross Dickson

