

Aeolothrips ericae

Distinguishing features

Both sexes with fore wings bearing two transverse dark bands, apical ring vein pale. Body and legs brown, antennal segment I pale, II–III largely yellow; abdominal segment X variable but often much paler than VIII–IX. Antennae 9-segmented, segment III with linear sensorium almost 0.5 as long as segment, IV with sensorium more than half length of segment and curved distally; segments V–IX forming a single unit with V considerably longer than VI–IX. Head and pronotum with no long setae; eyes prolonged on ventral surface, maxillary palps 3-segmented. Fore tarsus apically with stout recurved ventral hamus. Metanotal reticulation weak. Marginal setae on sternites arising at or close to margin; sternite VII paired accessory setae arising well in front of margin.

Male tergites IV and V with paired dorsal tubercles; setae at base of paired claspers on tergite IX shorter than clasper, with stout curved seta lateral to clasper.

Related species

About 115 species are placed in the genus *Aeolothrips*, mostly from the Palearctic Region but with about 30 from the Nearctic including the western USA, and a very few from India and Africa. *A. ericae* is a member of the Eurasian species-complex that includes *A. intermedius* and *A. fasciatus* Linnaeus. However, the males have a pair of very stout setae anterolateral to the bifurcate claspers on the ninth abdominal tergite. Females are readily distinguished from similar looking species in Britain by the pale colour of the basal antennal segments and the tenth abdominal segment that is often paler than segments VIII and IX.

Biological data

Closely associated with the flowers of *Erica* and *Calluna* [Ericaceae] of which it is probably a polinator, but also found in the flowers of various Fabaceae. This species is presumed to be a facultative predator, feeding on a mixed diet of pollen and the larvae of other thrips in the flowers where it breeds.

Distribution data

Described from British material (Bagnall, 1920), and widespread in Britain from Kent to Caithness (Mound *et al.*, 1976). It has also been recorded from County Cork in the Republic of Ireland (Collins, 2024). This thrips occurs widely across Europe from Norway southwards. It has also been introduced into North America.

Family name

AEOLOTHRIPIDAE

Species name

Aeolothrips ericae Bagnall

Original name and synonyms



Female



Head



Antenna (bright field)



Antenna (phase contrast)

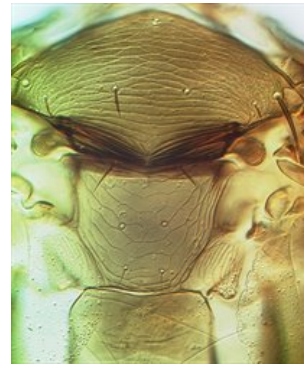
Aeolothrips ericae Bagnall, 1920: 60
Aeolothrips nobilis ab. *mulleri* Priesner, 1920: 51
Aeolothrips nobilis Priesner, 1921: 21
Aeolothrips speciosus Melis, 1933: 169
Aeolothrips nobilis f. *aterrima* Hukkinen, 1935: 88
Aeolothrips vittatus var. *albotarsata* Keler, 1936: 87
Aeolothrips lucidus Oettingen, 1944: 40

References

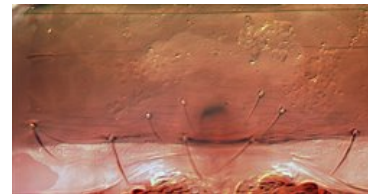
Bagnall RS (1920) Preliminary notes and descriptions of some European species of *Aeolothrips*. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* **56**: 60–62.

Collins DW (2024) A survey of Irish Thysanoptera in the collections of the Natural History Museum, London, with three additions to the Irish checklist. *Bulletin of the Irish Bibliographical Society* **47**: 1–24.

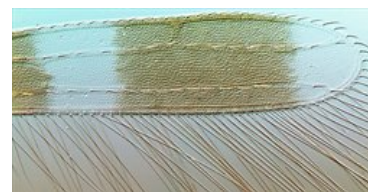
Mound LA, Morison GD, Pitkin BR & Palmer JM (1976) Thysanoptera. *Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects* **1** (11): 1–79.



Meso & metanota



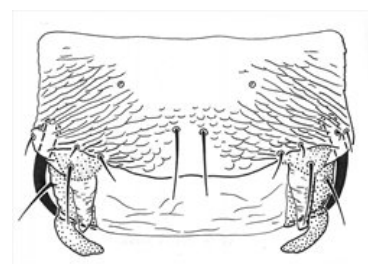
Female sternite VII



Tip of fore wing (phase contrast)



Fore wing



Male tergite IX