

Melanthrips ficalbii

Distinguishing features

Both sexes fully winged. Body legs and antennae generally brown, antennal segments II–III(IV) paler, tarsi almost yellow; fore wings with two dark cross bands. Antennae 9-segmented; segments II–VIII with rows of microtrichia, VIII and IX equal in length, sensoria obliquely transverse on III–IV. Head with 4 pairs of prominent postocular setae. Ocellar setae III arise on margins of ocellar triangle. Pronotum posterior margin with 5 pairs of prominent setae and one pair of elongate posteroangular setae. Mesonotum with microtrichia on posterior half. Metanotum with concentric sculpture lines bearing microtrichia, median setae small near posterior margin. Fore tibia inner apex with a stout apical seta. Tergite VIII median setae about 0.5 as long as tergite; tergite X with paired trichobothria well developed. Sternites III–V each with one or more pairs of discal setae, VII posterior margin with pair of lobes each bearing 2 setae at base. Male similar to female but abdomen slender.

Related species

The family Melanthripidae was recognised as distinct by Bhatti (1990a) and withdrawn from synonymy under Aeolothripidae. The two groups had been considered closely related due to similarities in their fore wings. However, the structure of abdominal sternite VII indicates that they are not closely related. Currently the Melanthripidae comprises four genera known only from fossils, and four genera that include many species from the southern Hemisphere. In the genus *Melanthrips* there are currently 36 species listed, mostly from the Mediterranean region, with three from India, two from South Africa, and two from southwestern USA. There are three species in southern Europe with the fore wings similar to *M. ficalbii* in bearing transverse dark bands (zur Strassen, 2003).

Biological data

Feeding and breeding in flowers of several plant species, and in Britain taken in association with *Galium* species, particularly *G. aparine* [Rubiaceae], and with *Reseda lutea* [Resedaceae].

Distribution data

Widespread and locally common in England as far north as Cumbria, and also recorded from Wales (Mound *et al.*, 1976). Also found in the warmer parts of western Europe and the western Mediterranean.

Family name

MELANTHRIPIDAE

Species name

Melanthrips ficalbii Buffa

Original name and synonyms

Melanthrips ficalbii Buffa, 1907: 61



Head & thorax



Antenna



Antenna



Antenna

Melanthrips angusticeps Bagnall, 1924: 10

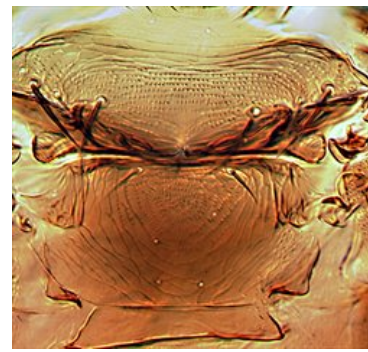
Melanthrips anglicus Priesner, 1936: 47

References

Bhatti JS. (1990a) Family group names in the Order Terebrantia (Insecta). *Zoology (Journal of Pure and Applied Zoology)* **2** (4): 185–192.

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

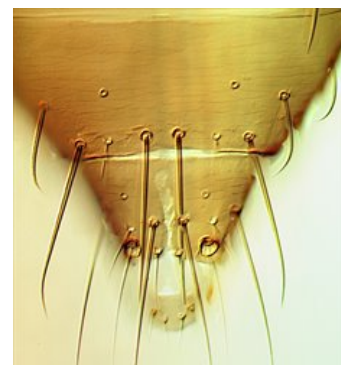
zur Strassen R (2003) Die terebranten Thysanopteren Europas und des Mittelmeer-Gebietes. *Die Tierwelt Deutschlands* **74**: 1–271.



Meso & metanota



Metanotum



Female tergites IX & X



Fore wing