Suocerathrips linguis

Distinguishing features

Female macroptera. Body and legs brown, head and tube darkest; tarsi and apices of tibiae yellow; antennal segment III yellow, IV–VIII progressively darker; fore wings weakly shaded; major setae light brown. Antennae 8-segmented, III with no sense cones, IV with 1 sense cone. Head small, cephalic setae all short and pointed; maxillary stylets wide apart and low in head. Pronotum with almost no sculpture; epimeral and posteroangular setal pairs well-developed, the other three pairs no larger than discal setae; notopleural sutures incomplete. Metanotum without sculpture. Fore tarsal tooth absent. Fore wings parallel sided, without duplicated cilia, sub-basal setae minute. Prosternal basantra absent; mesopresternum reduced to 2 small triangles. Tergites weakly reticulate; II-VI each with 1 pair of almost straight wing-retaining setae; setae S1 on IX shorter than tube. Tube longer than head, anal setae short.
Male with short wings not extending beyond tergite V; fore tarsal tooth absent; sternite VIII without pore plate.

Head & pronotum

Antenna

Related species

Only one species is placed in the genus *Suocerothrips*. The short maxillary stylets that are very low in the head, and the absence of a sense cone from the third antennal segment, are character states that preclude any suggestion of related species.

Biological data

This thrips is known only from substantial colonies found breeding on *Dracaena trifasciata* (=*Sansevieria*) [Aspagaraceae], an African plant that is much cultivated in protected environments in Europe. Apparently the thrips does not feed on the tissues of the plant but on a *Penicillium* fungus growing at the base of the plant (Moritz *et al*., 2004).

Metanotum & pelta

Distribution data

Described from material found in England, on *Sanseveria* plants in a glasshouse at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Mound & Marullo, 1994). This original population was eradicated by the plant health authorities and no further populations have been found in Britain. However, the species is also now known from similar plants in greenhouses in Europe, and presumably came originally from Africa. A substantial colony was reared and studied for several years by Gerald Moritz and colleagues in a laboratory at Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

Prosternites

Family name

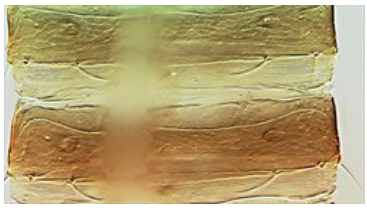
PHLAEOTHRIPIDAE - PHLAEOTHRIPINAE

Species name

Suocerathrips linguis Mound & Marullo

Original name and synonyms

Suocerathrips linguis Mound & Marullo, 1994: 96



Tergites IV-V

References

Moritz G, Schäfer E, Kumm S, Steller A, Tschuch G (2004) Der Alien-Thrips: *Suocerathrips linguis* - Biologie und Verhalten. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für allgemeine und angewandte Entomologie* **14**: 177–181.

Mound LA & Marullo R (1994) New thrips on Mother-in-Law's Tongue. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* **130**: 95–98.