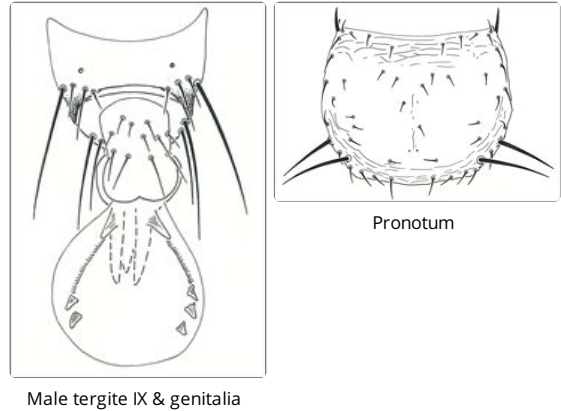


Odontothrips meliloti

Distinguishing features

Both sexes fully winged. Body and legs dark brown, tarsi paler, antennal segment III yellow, IV–VIII brown; fore wings brown with sub-basal white band. Antennae 8-segmented; segments III–IV constricted to apex, each with forked sense cone; segment VI sense cone with enlarged oval base; dorsal apex of segment I with pair of setae. Head wider than long; three pairs of ocellar setae present, pair III as long as distance between compound eyes, arising on or just outside anterior margins of ocellar triangle. Pronotum with two pairs of long posteroangular setae; discal area without sculpture lines but with about 10 setae. Fore tibia apex without claws, ventrally with small tubercle; major seta at inner apical margin not on a tubercle. Mesonotum with paired anterior campaniform sensilla, median setae close to posterior margin. Metanotum weakly reticulate; median setae long, arising at anterior margin; campaniform sensilla present. Fore wing first vein with setal row almost complete but with a small sub-apical gap; setal row complete on second vein. Abdominal tergites with no ctenidia, no sculpture medially; tergite VIII with posteromarginal comb broadly interrupted medially, with long slender microtrichia laterally; VIII with group of microtrichia anterolateral to spiracle; IX with 2 pairs of campaniform sensilla, X with long split. Sternites without discal setae, S1 on VII arising in front of margin.

Male smaller than female; tergite IX with pair of stout tubercles posterolaterally; sternites without pore plates; extruded genitalia bearing two rows each of 3 or 4 stout spines of which the basal pair is larger and well separated from the distal 2 pairs.



Male tergite IX & genitalia

Pronotum

Related species

The genus *Odontothrips* currently includes 33 species. All but two of these are from the Holarctic region, including Iran and China, but one species is described from Rajasthan, India, and another from Guinea. From Europe, 19 species of *Odontothrips* are recorded (zur Strassen, 2003), with eight from Britain. Almost all *Odontothrips* species breed only in the flowers of Fabaceae (Pitkin, 1972). The fore tibial apex of *meliloti* is essentially similar to that of *loti* but with the ventral tubercle smaller than in *ignobilis*, and the major seta at the inner apex is not on an obvious tubercle. The fore wing colour and setal row on the first vein are similar to *loti*, as is the lack of pronotal sculpture, but the male genitalia have two rows of endothecal spines.

Biological data

Feeding and breeding in flowers and pupating at ground level, and apparently specific to species of *Melilotus* [Fabaceae].

Distribution data

In Britain known only from a few southern localities (London and Somerset) (Pitkin, 1969, 1972; Mound *et al.*, 1976), but widespread in Central and Southern Europe, and also recorded from Iran and China (Mirab-balou *et al.*, 2011)

Family name

THRIPIDAE - THRIPINAE

Species name

Odontothrips meliloti Priesner

Original name and synonyms

Odontothrips meliloti Priesner, 1951: 358

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