Tropinota (Epicometis) hirta (Poda, 1761)

Taxonomy

Sub family: Cetoniinae / Tribe: Cetoniini / Genus: Tropinota / Subgenus: Epicometis

Distinguishing Features

Small to medium beetles with a broadly rounded psterior, body length: 8-13mm, body colour grey to Tropinota hirta dorsal view black. Densely covered in long cream/white setae. Clypeus with apex deeply emarginate, punctuated and setose. Pronotum without scale spots, and with a medially raised, longitudonal carina. Patches of microtrichia present on the elytra, similar to *Glycyphana*. Elytra with shallow striae and irregularly shaped, rounded punctations. raised third interstriae keel occasionally present anteriorly, and an elytral suture keel present. Mesometasternal process present, not projecting beyond mesocoxa, punctated and setose, with a truncated/broadly rounded and shiny margin. Foretibia tridentate.

Related and Similar Species

The genus Tropinota contains 14 species across 3 subgenera.

A very similar pest species, Tropinota (Tropinota) squalida, is also present throughout the Mediterranean region. Tropinota hirta is placed in the different Subgenus (Epicometis), which has the following subtle defining features: pronotum without smooth areas and elytral fith interstriae not strongly elevated as a keel and not bifurcated at the base. The males belonging to Tropinota s.str also have a median longitudonal groove along the ventral sternites that are absent in T. (Epicometis). Tropinota hirta can be readily distinguished from Australian Cetoniini representatives in the key (Glycyphana and Protaetia) by the median longitudonal carina on its pronotum, and the dense covering of the body in cream/white setae.

Biological Data

Commonly called the Apple Blossom Beetle, the adult beetles of Tropinota hirta are recognised pests on a large number of cultivated plants. They can cause significant damage by feeding on flowers and early stage fruit such as apple, pear, plum, cherry trees, and many ripening berry plants. They are also known to damage cereals inlcuding rye, canola, wheat, barley and lupins, and can feed on weedy flowers of dandelions and broomerape. There are reports of the beetles also attacking citrus, almond and Brassica varieties

Due to the beetle feeding during the flowering stage, control using pesticides is troublesome due to the risk of impacting important pollinators.

The larval stages are typical Cetoniini soil dwellers harmlessly living on decaying plant material.

Distribution

Tropinota hirta is a Palearctic species found throughout Europe, Northern Asia, and North Africa. It is currently absent from Australia.

Useful Links

PaDIL image set: http://www.padil.gov.au/pests-and-diseases/pest/main/135546 Biolib species profile: https://www.biolib.cz/en/taxon/id8162/ Line drawings of genitalia and scutellum: http://www.glaphyridae.com/Cetoniinae/Tropinota.html

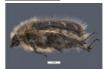
References

Ruiz, J.L. 2015. Description of a new species of Tropinota Mulsant, 1842, Subgenus Epicometis Burmeister, 1842, from northern Morocco (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae, Cetoniinae). Graellsia, 71(1): e019. ISSN 1989-953X.

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Tropinota hirta lateral view Photographer: Pia Scanlon



Tropinota hirta ventral view Photographer: <u>Pia Scanlon</u>



Tropinota hirta head front view Photographer: Pia Scanlon



Tropinota hirta clypeus view Photographer: Pia Scanlon





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