

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 posterior, body length: 8-13mm, body colour grey to 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, longitudinal 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, punctuated 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 fifth interstriae not strongly elevated as a keel and not bifurcated at the base. The males belonging to *Tropinota s.str* also have a median longitudinal 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 longitudinal 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 including rye, canola, wheat, barley and lupins, and can feed on weedy flowers of dandelions and broomrape. 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.



[Tropinota hirta dorsal view](#)

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[Tropinota hirta lateral view](#)

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[Tropinota hirta ventral view](#)

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[Tropinota hirta head front view](#)

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[Tropinota hirta clypeus view](#)

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