

Gynaikothrips ficorum

Distinguishing features

Both sexes fully winged. Body brown, tarsi and apices of tibiae yellow, also antennal segments III–VII largely yellow, VIII light brown; fore wings pale. Antennae 8-segmented; segment III with one sense cone, IV with 3 sense cones. Head longer than wide, slightly constricted behind eyes; postocular setae with apices bluntly pointed, scarcely extending to posterior margin of eye; maxillary stylets retracted almost to postocular setae, about one third of head width apart. Pronotum with major setae variable, anteromarginals minute, anteroangulars commonly well developed, midlaterals and posteroangulars usually much shorter than epimerals; epimeral sutures often not complete. Fore tarsus with small or minute tooth. Metanotum longitudinally reticulate. Fore wing parallel sided, with about 15 duplicated cilia. Pelta broadly triangular; tergites II–VII with two pairs of sigmoid wing-retaining setae; tergite IX setae S1 about 0.8 as long as tube. Male smaller than female, no fore tarsal tooth; tergite IX setae S2 short and stout.



Male

Antenna

Head & pronotum



Female segments IX–X Male segments IX–X Head & pronotum

Related species

About 40 species are listed in the genus *Gynaikothrips*, mainly from Southeast Asia. The genus remains poorly defined, and species recognition is difficult. Priesner (1939) gave a key to many species, but there are few studies on variation within and between populations of any species. *G. ficorum* is the most common species, because its host plant is so widely cultivated. It is usually recognised by the pattern of sculpture on the pronotum, the yellow antennae, and the minute fore tarsal tooth. It differs from the increasingly widespread species *G. uzeli* in having the pronotal posteroangular setae scarcely longer than the discal setae. However, populations in SE Asia sometimes show considerable variation in the lengths of the pronotal setae, such that distinction between species remains uncertain. Mound *et al.* (1996) suggested that *G. ficorum* is probably a form of *G. uzeli* that has been widely distributed by the horticultural trade.

Biological data

Breeding within rolled-leaf galls, and apparently specific to *Ficus microcarpa* [Moraceae]. Large populations on these trees can sometimes become a public nuisance (Mound *et al.*, 1996). Published records of *ficorum* from *Ficus benjamina* require further confirmation. Tree *et al.* (2015) discussed host specificity of this thrips.

Distribution data

Originally from SE Asia, but now widespread around the world, wherever its host plant is cultivated.

Family name

PHLAEOTHRIPIDAE, PHLAEOTHRIPIINAE

Species name

Gynaikothrips ficorum (Marchal)

Original name and synonyms

Phloeothrips ficorum Marchal, 1908: 252

Leptothrips flavicornis Bagnall, 1909: 529

Liothrips bakeri Crawford DL, 1910: 161

Leptothrips reticulatus Karny, 1912: 22

Gynaikothrips flavus Ishida, 1931: 40

Haplothrips blesai Plata, 1973: 165.

References

Mound LA, Wang C-L & Okajima S (1996) Observations in Taiwan on the identity of the Cuban laurel thrips (Thysanoptera, Phlaeothripidae). *Journal of the New York entomological Society* **103**: 185–190.

Priesner H (1939) Zur Kenntnis der Gattung *Gynaikothrips* Zimm. (Thysanoptera). *Mitteilungen der Münchner entomologisches Gesellschaft* **29**: 475–487.

Tree DJ, Mound LA & Field AR (2015) Host specificity studies on *Gynaikothrips* (Thysanoptera:Phlaeothripidae) associated with leaf galls of cultivated *Ficus* (Rosales: Moraceae) trees. *Florida Entomologist* **98**(3): 880–883.