

SCIENTIFIC NOTE

Metopoplax ditomoides* (Costa) (Hemiptera: Lygaeoidea: Oxycarenidae): First Canadian Record of a Palearctic Seed Bug*A.G. WHEELER, JR.¹ and E. RICHARD HOEBEKE²**

Metopoplax ditomoides (Costa) is a mainly west European and north African (Mediterranean) species (Péricart 1999) that has expanded its range in the last half century, as evidenced by comparing the distributions listed by Slater (1964) and Péricart (2001). First taken in England in 1952 (Woodroffe 1953a, b), this immigrant bug was not recorded again in Britain until breeding populations apparently became established in the 1990s; by the late 1990s, “prodigious numbers” were observed (Kirby *et al.* 2001). In continental Europe, *M. ditomoides* has spread north from the Mediterranean region (Rabitsch 2008) and probably also has been transported in shipments of plant material (Deckert 2004). This seed bug has been detected recently in several countries, including Belgium (Bruers and Viskens 1997), and has become more common in the Netherlands (Aukema 2003).

The first North American records were from Oregon (Benton, Lane, Marion, and Polk counties), where adults were collected from hazelnut (*Corylus avellana* L.) orchards and found swarming in houses (Lattin and Wetherill 2002). *Metopoplax ditomoides* soon was reported from California (Alameda, Marin, Solano, and Sonoma counties), with the first collections at Vernon (Sonoma Co.) in 2002 (Gaimari 2005), and from Washington State based on adults taken in a house at Lynden (Whatcom Co.) in 2006 (LaGasa and Murray 2007). Lynden is within about 6 km of the Canadian border south of Aldergrove, British Columbia.

Metopoplax ditomoides (Figure 1) can readily be distinguished from other Nearctic oxycarenids. The antenniferous tubercles are prominent and rounded anteriorly; the clypeus is produced and spatulate; the head, pronotum,

and scutellum are black, densely punctate, and have a vestiture of long, pale setae; and the forewings are pale to whitish, with veins of the membrane colorless to brown (Woodroffe 1953b, Péricart 1999).

Here we report *M. ditomoides* from BC as the first Canadian record for this oxycarenid. Voucher specimens have been deposited in the United States National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (USNM) and University of Georgia Collection of Arthropods, Athens, GA (UGCA).

Specimens examined: CANADA: BC, 100 Ave. nr 140 St., Guildford, Surrey,



Figure 1. *Metopoplax ditomoides* (Costa) ♀, British Columbia, Canada, Blackie Spit, Crescent Beach, Surrey, 28-vi-2011 (E. R. Hoebeke, A. G. Wheeler) [UGCA].

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49°10.994'N 122°50.195'W, 26-vi-2010, 1♀ sweeping forbs; Blackie Spit Park, Crescent Beach, Surrey, 49°03.579'N 122°52.875'W, 24-vi-2011, 26♂, 39♀ & 28-vi-2011, 13♂, 23♀ ex *Achillea millefolium* L., E.R. Hoebeke & A.G. Wheeler.

Adults in BC, including a mating pair, were collected from inflorescences of common yarrow (*A. millefolium*; Asteraceae).

Other forbs growing nearby were goose tongue or salt marsh plantain (*Plantago maritima* L. (Plantaginaceae) and silver burr ragweed (*Ambrosia chamissonis* (Less.) Greene (Asteraceae). The collection of *M. ditomoides* from yarrow at Blackie Spit Park is consistent with the bug's frequent association with composites in the Palearctic Region (Péricart 1999).

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specimens had been deposited in the USNM collection, as well as relevant pages from Péricart (1999), and Joseph V. McHugh (Department of Entomology, University of Georgia, Athens) for providing Fig. 1.

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