Pristiphora subbifida (Thomson) (Hymenoptera: Tenthredinidae), a Palearctic Sawfly New to North America

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Pristiphora subbifida is a western Palearctic sawfly which occurs from Sweden and Estonia south to France, Italy, Cyprus, and Ukraine (Taeger et al. 2006; Haris 2006). The host plant is Acer spp., possibly only Acer campestre (Liston et al. 2013). For the past 35 years, I have been running a Malaise trap at the same spot in the backyard of our suburban Virginia home. In 2000, I caught two unusual, mostly orange Pristiphora, unlike any Pristiphora known in North America. One more was caught in 2001 and another in 2002. One was also found in a Malaise trap sample from a Maryland residence in 2001. I set these aside hoping to obtain more specimens, but it did not appear again until another specimen was captured in 2015. None have been collected in nearby sites in northern Virginia, Maryland, or West Virginia where I have done extensive trapping. Investigation into its identity showed it to be identical to the European Pristiphora subbifida, and thus it can be considered an unexpected adventive in North America.

Pristiphora subbifida belongs to the subbifida group, a small group of species restricted to the western Palearctic Region. The group was characterized by Haris (2006, as “Table B”) and Liston and Späth (2008); both also keyed the species. Further notes, separation of closely related species, and probably host plants were given by Liston et al. (2013).

Nematus subbifidus Thomson 1871: 105.

Description.—Female: Length, ~7.0 mm. Antenna with dorsal surface black, ventral surface whitish. Head with orbits orange and area below antennae more whitish; frons, postocellar area, and posterior genae black. Thorax orange with mesonotum, metanotum and mesosternum black. Legs orange; apical fore and mid tarsomeres, apex of hind tibia and hind tarsus black. Abdomen orange; sheath black and small spot on inner margins of each half of first tergum black. Wings hyaline, veins and stigma black.

Head and body smooth, shiny. Tarsal claws almost bifid, inner tooth long, about 0.75 length of outer tooth. Saw-sheath only slightly expanded laterally, blunt at apex in dorsal view (Fig. 3; Liston and Späth 2008: fig. 30). Lancet with serrulae flat, with minute subbasal teeth; hairs on annuli short, less than 0.25 distance between annuli (Liston and Späth 2008: fig. 32).

Male: Unknown in Europe and North America.