First Report of Smynthurodes betae (Hemiptera: Aphididae) on Phelipanche ramosa (Orobanchaceae)

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First report of *Smynthurodes betae* (Hemiptera: Aphididae) on *Phelipanche ramosa* (Orobanchaceae)

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*Smynthurodes betae* Westwood (Hemiptera: Aphididae: Erio- somatinae: Fordini), also known as bean root aphid, is a host-al- ternating aphid species with a 2-yr life cycle. Its primary host is *Pistacia* spp. (Anacardiaceae), on which it creates leaf galls. Secondary hosts occur in many genera and families of plants, principally Asteraceae, Fabaceae, and Solanaceae (Blackman & Eastop 2008). *Smynthurodes betae* feed on roots, often in ants’ nests (Lusius spp.; Hymenoptera: Formicidae). On both primary and secondary hosts it may be a serious pest, inflicting direct harm through induction of persistent leaf galls on *Pistacia* and by sucking the sap of sec- ondary hosts and causing root deformations. Its occurrence is not restricted to areas of its primary host’s occurrence (Mediterranean region); permanently parthenogenetic (anholocyclic) populations also occur in various parts of the Northern Hemisphere that are characterized by moderate climate (Capinera 2001).

Holoparasitic plants of the family Orobanchaceae parasitize the roots of both wild and cultivated hosts. Several species are seri- ous agricultural pests (weeds). One of the most damaging weeds is the branched broomrape, *Phelipanche ramosa* (L.) Pomel (syn. *Oro- banche ramosa* L.) (Orobanchaceae), an obligate root parasite that causes significant losses in a variety of crops, especially tomatoes and tobacco. It is native to Eurasia and North Africa, but has been introduced in many other areas of the world.

Field surveys conducted in Poland in Sep and Oct 2017 revealed infestations of *P. ramosa* by larvae and adult apterous females of a secondary-host generation of *S. betae* in 1 locality in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Sandomierz County, near Szewce (50.6166°N, 21.6166°E, 145 masl). Here, *P. ramosa* parasitized roots in a 2-ha area of tomato crops containing about 2,000 shoots. Infestation with *S. betae* was observed on the underground parts of broom- rape shoots, on both haustoria and tubers, by digging plants from the soil (Fig. 1). Numerous larvae fed on broomrape sap, resulting in weakened or dead shoots (Fig. 1). A single plant was parasitized by over 50 *S. betae* nymphs, and 10 to 20% of the total population of plants were infested. Distinguishing characteristics of *S. betae* include (a) globular body shape; (b) diameter about 2 mm; (c) short appendages; (d) whitish to yellowish color; (e) slightly waxy covering; and (f) the young nymphs are flattened and olive-green (Fig. 2).

DNA was extracted using a DNeasy Blood & Tissue Kit by Qiagen (Venlo, Netherlands) and a standard barcode sequence of mito- chondrial cytochrome c oxidase subunit I (COI) was amplified using the primers LCO1490 and HCO2198. The Neighbor-Joining phyloge- netic tree showed that the newly sequenced COI region of *S. betae* (GenBank accession no. MG81930) was 99% similar to other *S. be- toe sequences found in GenBank (EU701910.1, KRO45151.1).

So far, only a few insects have been reported to feed on Oro- banche (Orobanchaceae), (e.g., *Phytomyza orobanchi* Kaltenbach (Diptera: Agromyzidae), which is very promising as a biological control agent of broomrape (Linke et al. 1990; Klein & Kroschel 2002); *Smicronyx cyaneus* Gyll. (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) on Oro- banche foetida Poir. (Orobanchaceae) (Zermane et al. 2001); and *Geoica utricularia* (Passerini) (Hemiptera: Aphididae) on *O. foetida* (Boukhris-Bouhachem et al. 2011). Heretofore, *Smynthurodes be- tae* has been reported from *Orobanche crenata* Forsskål, *O. var- iegata* Wallr., and *P. aegyptiaca* (Pers.) Pomel (all Orobanchaceae) (Holman 2009). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first report of *S. betae* parasitizing *P. ramosa*. Further observations on the po- tential use of this insect as a control method for *P. ramosa* might be useful, because poor growth and necrosis have been observed in broomrape. Use of natural enemies appears to be a promising approach for suppression of root parasitic plants (Klein & Kros- chel 2002; Qasem 2010). Recent observations have shown that the melon aphid (*Aphis gossypii* Glover (Hemiptera: Aphididae)) may be a biological control method for broomrape, because it was found to completely stop the growth and flowering of broomrape plants (Borkowski & Dyki 2008).

**Summary**

The bean root aphid, *Smynthurodes betae* Westwood (Hemiptera: Aphididae: Erio- somatinae: Fordini) is reported for the first time feeding on haustoria of branched broomrape, *Phelipanche ramosa*, (Orobanchaceae) a crop- parasitic plant. Field surveys conducted in Poland revealed infestations of *P. ramosa* by nymphs and adult apterous females of a secondary-host generation of *S. betae* in 1 locality in Sandomierz County, near Szewce, Poland. Numerous nymphs of *S. betae* fed on broomrape sap, resulting in poor growth or dead shoots, and 10 to 20% of the total population of broomrape was infested. Potential use of this insect as a biological control method for invasive broomrapes requires further study.

**Key Words:** bean root aphid; branched broomrape; holoparasitic plant; haustoria

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Sumario

El áfido de la raíz del frijol, Smythurodes betae Westwood (Aphididae: Eriosomatinae: Fordini) se reporta por primera vez alimentándose de haustorios de orobanque ramificado, Phelipanche ramosa, (Orobanchaceae) una planta parásita de los cultivos. Los sondeos de campo realizados en Polonia revelaron infestaciones de ninjas y hembras adultas apteras de S. betae que utiliza la planta P. ramosa como un hospedero secundario en 1 localidad del condado de Sandmierz, cerca de Szwec, Polonia. Numerosas ninjas de S. betae se alimentaron de savia del orobanque, lo que resultó en un crecimiento deficiente o brotes muertos, con una infestación del 10 al 20% de la población total del orobanque. El uso potencial de este insecto como un método de control biológico para el orobanque invasivo requiere más estudio.

Palabras Clave: áfido o pulgón de la raíz de frijol; orobanque ramificado; planta holoparasitaria; haustoria.

Fig. 1. General habit of the holoparasitic broomrape Phelipanche ramosa: noninfected plant (A, D), plant weakened by aphids infection (B, E), Smythurodes betae feeding haustoria of broomrape (also visible are Lasius sp. ants) (C, F).
References Cited


