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Authors: Ulyshen, Michael D., and Miller, Douglass R.

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FIRST RECORD OF *ACIZZIA JAMATONICA* (HEMIPTERA: PSYLLIDAE) IN NORTH AMERICA: FRIEND OR FOE?

MICHAEL D. ULYSHEN¹ AND DOUGLASS R. MILLER²

¹USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Athens, GA 30602

²USDA-ARS, Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Beltsville, MD 20705

Mimosa or silk tree (*Albizia julibrissin* Durazzini) was introduced from Asia to Europe and then from Europe to North America in the mid eighteenth century (Cotthran 2004). While still widely prized for landscaping purposes, the tree has become naturalized and is considered to be an invasive species throughout much of the southeastern United States (Miller 2003).

In Sep 2006, one of us (MDU) noticed a group of *A. julibrissin* trees in Clarke County, Georgia (Athens, Lake Herrick, 33°55.853'N, 083°22.183'W) heavily infested with an unknown psyllid species. The insects were causing considerable stress to the trees with many leaves yellowed, wilted, or missing. Specimens were identified (by Debra Creel & DRM) as *Acizzia jamatonica* (Kuwayama), an Asian species that was recently found attacking the same tree species in Europe (Alma et al. 2002; EPPO Reporting Service 2002).

Acizzia jamatonica, like some other members of the genus (Palmer & Witt 2006), appears to be highly host specific and is thought to feed exclusively on species of *Albizia* (Alma et al. 2002; EPPO Reporting Service 2002). If it is indeed monophagous, the species is unlikely to pose much risk to native plant species (Van Klinken & Edwards 2002) and may benefit efforts to control *A. julibrissin* in the southeast. However, with respect to the economic and aesthetic values of *A. julibrissin* in both Europe and the United States, *A. jamatonica* might be viewed by many as a harmful pest species (EPPO Reporting Service 2004). Further investigation is needed to better predict the potential biological, economic, and aesthetic impacts of this recent arrival.

Acizzia jamatonica is the fourth species of *Acizzia* to be recorded in the United States. Other species include *A. acaciaebaileyanae* (Froggatt) first reported in 1987 from California on *Acacia*, *A. haekae* Tuthill first reported in 2003 from California on *Grevillea*, and *A. uncatoides* (Ferris & Klyver) first reported in 1954 from California on *Acacia*. The invasive species in California are native to Australia (Gill, personal communication 2006).

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SUMMARY

Acizzia jamatonica (Kuwayama) (Hemiptera: Sternorrhyncha: Psyllidae) is reported for the first time in North America. Because the species is thought to feed exclusively on *Albizia*, it may prove to be an effective biocontrol agent against the invasive *Albizia julibrissin* Durazzini in the southeastern United States. Because *A. julibrissin* is also an ornamental plant of some importance, the arrival of *A. jamatonica* may not be welcomed by many. This is the fourth invasive species of *Acizzia* to be found in the United States.

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