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AN ERIOPHYID MITE, *VITTACUS PLUCHEAE* SP. N. (ACARI : ERIOPHYOIDEA : ERIOPHYIDAE), ON *PLUCHEA DIOSCORIDIS* L. (COMPOSITAE) FROM EGYPT

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**TAXONOMY ABSTRACT**

*Vittacus plucheae* sp. n. was collected from ploughman’s spikenard (*Pluchea dioscoridis* L.). It was found in association with *Eriophyes dioscoridis* Soliman & Abou-Awad (1977) infesting both leaf surfaces and stems causing irregularly shaped galls with high density.

**TAXONOMIE RÉSUMÉ**

*Vittacus plucheae* n. sp. a été récolté sur le nard du laboureur (*Pluchea dioscoridis* L.). Il a été trouvé en association avec *Eriophyes dioscoridis* Soliman et Abou-Awad (1977), infestant à la fois les faces des feuilles et la surface des tiges, et causant densément des galles de forme irrégulière.

**INTRODUCTION**

Keifer (1969) erected the genus *Vittacus* which he characterized by: thanosomal tergites on mid-dorsum formed into hard transverse plates, in addition to the dorsal tubercles widespread, somewhat produced, on rear shield margin, and directing tubercles setae divergently to rear. Up till now, *Vittacus mansoni* Keifer (1969) is the only species (genotype) which belong to this genus. In Egypt, genus *Vittacus* has been recorded for the first time. However, *Vittacus plucheae* is added to our knowledge of the Egyptian fauna of eriophyid mites.

**Vittacus plucheae** sp. n.

(Fig. 1)

This species is related to *Vittacus mansoni* Keifer, 1969, but can be differentiated in having shield design varied; coxae I & II blank; tergites without microtubercles; microtubercles on sternites rounded; telosome with five rings; accessory seta present.

**FEMALE.** — Length of body 145-183 \( \mu m \); width of body 53-59 \( \mu m \). The type specimen 179 \( \mu m \) long, 57 \( \mu m \) wide; fusiform; light yellow in colour. Rostrum about 19 \( \mu m \) long, directed down, chelicera about 15 \( \mu m \) long. Shield 55 \( \mu m \) long, 53 \( \mu m \) wide, with clear anterior lobe, somewhat rounded. Shield design obscure; median, admedian and submedian lines absent; dorsal tubercles nearly elongate, widespread, 33 \( \mu m \) apart, ahead of rear margin, the seta short (6 \( \mu m \) long), directing divergently laterally to rear, tubercles connected by a sinuate line from each tubercle posteriorly forming nearly bowl shaped; on dorsal shield, hexagon shaped at middle of shield. Forelegs 24 \( \mu m \) long; femur 8.5 \( \mu m \) long; genu 3 \( \mu m \) long, seta 12.5 \( \mu m \) long; tibia

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5 μm long, seta 2.5 μm long; tarsus 5 μm long, outside seta 17 μm long. Claw 6 μm long, loosely curved, with clear knob at tip. Featherclaw 4-rayed. Hindlegs 21 μm long; femur 8 μm long; genu 4 μm long, seta 4 μm long; tibia 3.5 μm long, without seta; tarsus 4 μm long, outside seta about 14 μm long. Claw 7 μm long, loosely curved, with clear knob at tip. Coxae blank; anterior coxae with sternal ridge between. Anterior coxae contiguous, each with two setae; coxal setae I & II nearly equally apart, setae II near base of sternal ridge; posterior coxae with anterior one and with single seta; seta of coxae II 25 μm long. Anterior coxae larger than posterior one. Abdominal thanosome with 18 moderately broad tergites and about 62 sternites; tergites

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Fig. 1. — Vittacus p/ucheae, female — DA. Dorsal view of anterior section of shield; SA. Side view of anterior section of mite; F. Featherclaw; SP. Side view of posterior section of mite; D. Dorsal view of mite; V. Ventral view of mite; GFI. Female genitalia and coxae.
covering 2-4 sternites laterally; dorsally each tergite bearing transverse thickened band, but nearly flat; laterally each band forming a subdorsal ridge; tergites without microtubercles; microtubercles on sternites rounded, usually touching ring margins. All usual abdominal setae present; lateral thanosomal seta 8 µm long, above and behind genital seta, on about sternite 13; 1st ventral seta 25 µm long, on sternite 27; 2nd ventral seta 13 µm long, on sternite 45; 3rd or telosomal seta 13 µm long, on about sternite 62. Telosome with 5 rings. About the last 12 rings with elongate microtubercles ventrally. Caudal and accessory setae arise from a slight lobe behind the last tergite. Caudal seta 32 µm long; accessory seta 3 µm long. Female genitalia 14 µm long, 17 µm wide, with about 10 longitudinal scorelines; seta 9 µm long.

MALE. — Unknown.

Host: Pluchea dioscoridis L. (Compositae).

Relation to host: The mite was found on Pluchea dioscoridis L. in association with Eriophyes dioscoridis Soliman & Abou-Awad (1977) infesting both leaf surfaces of both young and mature leaves, as well as stems, causing numerous irregular galls. A tiny pit as an entrance to the gall is present on the lower lead surfaces. Combined infestation of both species may cause malformation to succulent terminal leaves and leaf falier.

Holotype and 11 females were collected from the same host, El-Fayum, April 15, 1984 (B. A. Abou-Awad). Type specimens are deposited in Plant Protection Department, National Research Centre, Dokki — Cairo, Egypt.

REFERENCES


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