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http://www1.montpellier.inra.fr/CBGP/acarologia/subscribe.php
Previous volumes (2010-2020): 250 € / year (4 issues)
Acarologia, CBGP, CS 30016, 34988 MONTFERRIER-sur-LEZ Cedex, France
ISSN 0044-586X (print), ISSN 2107-7207 (electronic)

The digitalization of Acarologia papers prior to 2000 was supported by Agropolis Fondation under the reference ID 1500-024 through the « Investissements d’avenir » programme (Labex Agro: ANR-10-LABX-0001-01)

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A NEW SPECIES OF TARSONEMUS (ACARINA: TARSONEMIDAE) 
FROM CULTIVATED MUSHROOMS

by

N. W. Hussey.

(Glasshouse Crops Research Institute, Littlehampton, Sussex).

Moreton (1958) reported the discovery of a Tarsonemid mite damaging sporophores of cultivated mushrooms (Agaricus bisporus) on a commercial farm in Kent. The mites caused superficial browning at the base of the sporophore and severed the mycelial attachments so as to leave only a small basal knob of tissue. This type of damage has been recognized by growers for some years but the mites have not previously been identified. Examination of Moreton's material shows that it represents a new species. In the United States four Tarsonemus species — waitei Banks, randsi Ewing, confusus Ewing (Beer, 1954) and fioricolus Canestrini (Schaarschmidt, 1959) have been recorded from mushrooms. A key separating these species from T. myceliophagus, here described, is appended. The terminology adopted is that used by Lindquist and Bedard (1961) for morphological structure and definition of measurements.

**Tarsonemus myceliophagus n. sp.**

*Female*: (Figs. 1 & 2) Body short and broadly oval, broadest at a point one third of body length from posterior end. Legs short and stout, the second pair as long as the first; fourth pair very short with coxae widely separated.

Apodemes I weakly developed anteriorly but more strongly so at their point of junction, the latter being widely separated from anteromedian apodeme. Anteromedian apodeme is thus interrupted for one quarter of its length between junction of apodemes I and a point between the condyles of coxae II; conspicuous thickenings on apodeme at this point and between apodemes II; indistinctly forked at junction with transverse apodeme. Apodemes II curved posteriorly and separated from anteromedian apodeme by distance equal to interruption in latter. Transverse apodeme with two small anterior projections in line with coxal setae II. Anterior fork of posteromedian apodeme separate and indistinct, terminating

anteriorly on a level with apodeme III, median and posterior thickenings on remainder of apodeme. Apodeme III not reaching coxal setae III. Apodeme IV longer than III, separated from posteromedian apodeme. Posterior extremity of apodeme III in line with termination of posteromedian apodeme.

Pseudostigmatic organ with elongate, oval apex three times as long as pedicel. Coxal and sacral setae present and backwardly directed but coxal setae III directed posteromedially. Vertical setae four-fifths length of capitulum, scapular setae equal in length to leg II. External humeral setae only slightly longer than internal. Internal lumbar setae as long as sacral setae.

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Fig. 1. — Female Tarsonemus myceliophagus n. sp. ventral view, dotted lines represent dorsal setation.

Single claw of leg I and paired claws of legs II and III strongly formed with large ambulacra. Setation leg I: femur and genu with three setae; tibiotorus with ten setae and two sensory clubs. Leg II, femur with three setae, genu with two and tibia with three setae but the tarsus bears five setae including one sensory club and one dorsal ventrodiscal spine. Leg III, femorogenu with two setae, tibia and tarsus each with three setae. Leg IV, with four setae, apical segment with a straight subapical seta as long as free part of leg and with a very long whip-like apical seta; subapical segment with one small proximal seta and one stout, straight subapical seta.

Body Dimensions: length 180-192 μ, width 105-118 μ.

Male: (Fig. 3) Apodemes I strongly united to anteromedian apodeme; latter well developed but interrupted for about one quarter of its total length between apodemes II. Apodemes II curved posteriorly but separated at point of interruption in anteromedian apodeme. Posteromedian apodeme not bifurcate posteriorly. Genital capsule about as wide as long.

Fig. 2. — Female T. myceliophagus Setation Legs I-IV.

Posterolateral scapular setae shorter than anteromedial scapular setae, posterolateral vertical seta half the length of anteromedial vertical seta. Posteromedial seta of metapodosomal shield absent.

Leg I longer than leg II; single claw of leg I and paired claws of legs II and III strongly formed. Leg setation: as in female except as follows: — Leg I: femur with one seta; tibiotorus with eleven setae and two sensory clubs. Leg II: femur with one seta, genu with three setae and tarsus with three setae and a sensory club. Leg III: femur with one seta, genu with three and tibia with four
setae. Leg IV: trochanter wider than long with one seta, femur stout and curved with three setae of which the inner distal seta is the longest; tibia with one very long tactile and two minute setae and a long curved terminal claw.

Body Dimensions: length 128-137 μ, width 72-81 μ.
Locality.

Holotype: female on mushrooms at Bilting, Kent (B. D. Moreton). Para-
types: three females ex mushroom compost, Bilting and three females Rustington,
Sussex (N. W. Hussey). Four males including allotype, Rustington (N. W. Hus-
sey). Specimens also found in compost from Lee Valley (Essex), Bath (Somerset)
and Ballykelly (Ireland).

Holotype female in British Museum (N. H.) and paratypes in collection at
Glasshouse Crops Research Institute, Littlehampton.

Taxonomic Relationships.

In Schaarschmidt’s key to Tarsonemus females T. myceliophagus runs out to
couple 8 but is distinguished from T. bifurcatus Schaarschmidt by the shorter
bifurcations of the anteromedian apodeme and the presence of a fork on the ante-
rior portion of the posteromedian apodeme.

Key to Tarsonemus species associated with cultivated mushrooms.

1 (6) Anteromedian apodeme joined to transverse apodeme.
2 (5) Anteromedian apodeme separated from junction of apodeme I.
3 (4) Transverse apodeme smooth .................................. T. waitei
4 (3) Transverse apodeme with two small anterior projections .... T. myceliophagus
5 (2) Anteromedian apodeme joined to junction of apodemes I ........ T. randsi
6 (1) Anteromedian apodeme not joined to transverse apodeme.
7 (8) Apodeme III joined to posteromedian apodeme ............... T. floricolus
8 (7) Apodeme III not joined to posteromedian apodeme .......... T. confusus

Summary.

Tarsonemus myceliophagus n. sp. attacking the base of mushroom sporophores
is described. A key separating the five Tarsonemus species known to be asso-
ciated with mushrooms is presented.

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