

Nota Científica
(Short Communication)

**MELITTOBIA DIGITATA DAHMS (HYMENOPTERA: EULOPHIDAE)
AND MONODONTOMERUS MEXICANUS GAHAN
(HYM.: PTEROMALIDAE) ON A NEST OF TRYPOXYLON
(TRYPARGILUM) MEXICANUM (SAUSSURE) (HYM.: CRABRONIDAE)
COLLECTED NEAR XALAPA, VERACRUZ, MEXICO**

González, J.M., E. Acosta V., C. Sormani & S. B. Vinson. 2010. *Melittobia digitata* Dahms (Hymenoptera: Eulophidae) and *Monodontomerus mexicanus* (Gahan) (Hym.: Pteromalidae) on a nest of *Trypoxylon (Trypargilum) mexicanum* (Saussure) (Hym.: Crabronidae) collected near Xalapa, Veracruz, México. *Acta Zoológica Mexicana (n.s.)*, 26(1): 215-218.

ABSTRACT: In a mud-nest built by *Trypoxylon mexicanum*, collected near Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, we recorded the presence of two parasitoids *Monodontomerus mexicanus* (Pteromalidae) and *Melittobia digitata* (Eulophidae), and one ant: *Solenopsis geminata* (Formicidae). The pteromalid is reported for the first time from Veracruz while the eulophid is reported from Mexico attacking another hymenopteran. The presence of an ant inside an empty cell is possibly just a coincidence.

During June 2008 short trips were done in Veracruz to collect muddauber nests built by *Sceliphron* and *Trypoxylon* wasps (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae, Crabronidae), as well as fruits attacked by fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae). The main purpose of those collecting trips was to try to find parasitoids of the genus *Melittobia* (Hymenoptera: Eulophidae) attacking muddauber wasps and possibly fruit flies. After bringing all collected nests to the Instituto de Ecología (INECOL) laboratories for analysis, the contents of one nest of *Trypoxylon (Trypargilum) mexicanum* (Saussure) caught our attention.

This nest was collected from the eave of a house [Emiliano Zapata, Veracruz state, México. N19° 26.7' W96° 46.9', 890 m]. This solitary wasp was originally described (as *T. albitarse* var. *mexicana* Saussure, 1867; Not *T. mexicanum* Saussure, 1867 = *T. saussurei* Rohwer, 1912) from Orizaba, Veracruz, México (Coville 1982). The species is known to occur from Veracruz, México to Central America, but also in Hispaniola (Rau 1940; Rau 1943; Coville 1982; Genaro 2007).

The species was identified from an adult that emerged later at INECOL. The nest clearly resembled those of *T. (T.) politum* Say in the US (Rau & Rau 1916; Rau 1940; Cross *et al.* 1975) and was formed by two parallel tubes (A & B), with an incipient (and empty) one on top of both starting cells of tubes A & B. The nest contained 8 cells (4 per tube) and they were the following:

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Tube A:

Cell 1: 11 specimens of at least 3 different undetermined species of Araneidae, were found inside. The number of spiders found somehow coincides with those previously found in cells of *T. (T.) mexicanum* in Jacala, Hidalgo (Rau 1943).

Cell 2: With a cocoon containing a prepupa of *T. (T.) mexicanum* (Saussure).

Cell 3: With a cocoon containing an adult *T. (T.) mexicanum* (Saussure) ready to emerge from the pupal skin.

Cell 4: Entrance cell; open to the outside.

Tube B:

Cell 1: It contained a cocoon of *T. (T.) mexicanum* filled with several individuals of *Monodontomerus mexicanus* Gahan (Hymenoptera: Pteromalidae) (2 males and 18 females). The parasitoid is distributed from Mexico to Panama (Grissell 2000). It does not appear among the Mexican Chalcidoidea mentioned by González-Hernández (2000), but Ruiz-Cancino *et al.* (2004) lists the species for the country. The species was originally described from 7 males and 20 females reared from *T. (T.) mexicanum* collected at Jacala, Hidalgo, and it is also known from Chiapas, Guerrero and Zacatecas, parasitizing several Hymenopterans (Gahan 1941; Grissell 1979; Grissell 1995; Grissell 2000; Rau 1947; Torchio 1974). As far as we know, this is the first record of *M. mexicanus* for Veracruz.

Cell 2: Empty, except for the presence of a single immature spider (Araneidae).

Cell 3: With 9 males and 298 macropterous females of *Melittobia digitata* Dahms (Hymenoptera: Eulophidae) inside a cocoon of *T. (T.) mexicanum*. *Melittobia digitata* is known to occur only in North America, parasitizing several insect orders (Dahms 1984; González *et al.* 2008; Matthews *et al.* 2009). The parasitoid species was previously reported from Mexico parasitizing Mexican fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae: *Anastrepha ludens* Loew) (Copeland *et al.* 2008; González *et al.* 2008; Matthews *et al.* 2009) but this is the first record of *M. digitata* attacking a Hymenoptera in this country.

Cell 4: Cell open to the outside containing a dead specimen of *Solenopsis geminata* (Fabricius). This ant species is widely distributed in the Americas (Bolton 1995; Creighton 1930; Trager 1991). Even though the arthropod fauna associated to mud dauber nests is frequently similar, very well known and constitutes an intricate food web (Matthews 1997), it is not uncommon that other insects not associated to such food web can be eventually encountered inside the mud nests (González & Vinson 2007). This specimen was possibly a scout from a nearby colony and its presence was probably just a coincidence.

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Jorge M. GONZÁLEZ^{1*}, Emilio ACOSTA V.²

Carlo SORMANI² & S. Bradleigh VINSON¹

¹Texas A & M University, Department of Entomology, Entomology Research Laboratory, College Station, Texas 77843-2475, USA. *Correspondent E-mail: gonzalez.jorge.m@gmail.com

²Instituto de Ecología, A.C., Ap. Postal 63, 91000, Xalapa, Veracruz, MEXICO.