



First record of the bronze bug, *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* Carpintero & Dellapé (Heteroptera: Thaumastocoridae), a new exotic pest of *Eucalyptus* trees in Italy

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In September 2011, the bronze bug *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* Carpintero & Dellapé (Heteroptera: Thaumastocoridae) was detected in Italy infesting *Eucalyptus* spp. in several urban and rural sites of the Latium region (Italy) (Laudonia & Sasso, 2012). This is the first record of a member of the family Thaumastocoridae from the European and Mediterranean region. Until recently, the Australian group of Thaumastocoridae was considered rare (Cassis *et al.*, 1999), but over the past 10 years, *T. peregrinus* has rapidly established as a severe pest on 13 species of *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *citriodora* in Australia (Noack & Rose, 2007; Noack *et al.* 2009), and spread to South America (Martinez-Crosa, 2008; Carpintero & Dellapé 2006; Noack & Coviella, 2006; Wilcken *et al.*, 2010; Savaris *et al.*, 2011) and South Africa (Jacobs & Nesar, 2005; Giliomee, 2011).

The adult of *T. peregrinus* is characterized by a strongly dorso-ventrally compressed and elongate body between 2-3.5 mm in length, a broad head, pedicellate eyes, and elongate conspicuous mandibular plates which are curved and broad on the outer margin (Noack *et al.*, 2011). The body is light brown with darker areas. The male genital capsule is asymmetrical. The eggs are dark, oval, with a sculptured chorion and a round operculum, on average 0.5 mm long and 0.2 mm wide. The crawlers and young nymphs are essentially orange, with black spots on the thorax and first abdominal segments. A detailed description of *T. peregrinus* has been published by Carpintero and Dellapé (2006), and more recently a re-description of the species has been published by Noack *et al.* (2011).

Infested *Eucalyptus* trees show leaf silverying, ranging from chlorosis to bronzing. Heavy infestations cause leaves to become red/brown and defoliation occurs. These symptoms are particularly serious and evident on *E. grandis*, while the prevalent symptoms on other *Eucalyptus* species are silver leaves. The bronze bugs are also considered as a nuisance, having been reported to 'sting' people in urban parks, playgrounds, etc. (Jacobs & Nesar, 2005).

In Southern Europe (Italy, Spain and Portugal), *Eucalyptus* species are probably the only large scale and economically successful short rotation tree plantations also used for industrial purposes, such as production of sawn wood, wood pulp, charcoal and biomass fuel. The nectar from flowers of some eucalypts produces high-quality of monofloral honey. *T. peregrinus* is a serious pest of *Eucalyptus* species in the Southern Hemisphere and could become a forest and urban pest in Southern Europe and in the Mediterranean Basin.

All pictures were kindly provided by Dr Raffaele SASSO, ENEA, Italy



Damage on *Eucalyptus grandis*



***Thaumastocoris peregrinus*: eggs**



Thaumastocoris peregrinus: male and female



Thaumastocoris peregrinus: adult, nymph and crawlers



Thaumastocoris peregrinus: female



Thaumastocoris peregrinus: males and nymphs

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