

## A new species of *Longitarsus* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) feeding on Chinese potato, *Plectranthus rotundifolius* (Lamiaceae) in southern India

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### Abstract

*Longitarsus serrulatus*, a new species feeding on *Plectranthus rotundifolius* (Lamiaceae) in Kerala, India, is described and illustrated. Host plant data and ecological information are provided.

**Key words:** Coleoptera, Chrysomelidae, *Longitarsus*, new species, *Plectranthus rotundifolius*, India

### Introduction

Chinese potato *Plectranthus rotundifolius* (Poir.) Spreng. (= *Coleus parviflorus* Benth.), a native of Africa, is a popular introduced minor tuber crop in south-east Asia. The tubers have a special aromatic flavour and taste and are used as a vegetable. Chinese potato in India is infested by nine species of insect pests including two beetles viz. *Nupserha vexator* P. (Cerambycidae) and *Leucopholis coneophora* Burm. (Scarabaeidae) (Palaniswami, 1994). *Longitarsus* Latreille is one of the most important leaf beetle genera with more than 700 species. Though about 100 species are known from the Oriental region, only seven named species of *Longitarsus* are known to occur in south India, excluding *L. nigripennis* (Motschulsky), a species erroneously placed in *Longitarsus* (Maulik, 1926; Scherer, 1969; Gruev and Askevold, 1988). Known host plants of the genus belong to at least a dozen families with marked preference for members of Boraginaceae, Lamiaceae, Asteraceae and Verbenaceae. Larvae are usually subterranean root feeders. Members of the genus *Longitarsus* are small to medium sized flea beetles easily identified by a very long first metatarsomere which is at least half as long as the metatibia. Other salient fea-