

## **A new genus and species of phytoseiid mites (Acari: Mesostigmata) from southern Tunisia, with discussion of its phylogenetic position**

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### **Abstract**

The phytoseiid mite *Africoseiulella flechtmani* **gen. nov.**, **sp. nov.** is described from specimens collected on an unknown small weed growing under palm trees in an oasis in southern Tunisia. This mite is unique in the following combination of characteristics: dorsal shield of both sexes and male ventri-anal shield eroded; all dorsal shield setae minute; peritreme very short; setae JV1, JV3, JV4 and ZV1 absent; hypostome elongate; chelicera with long median segment but digits short and edentate; legs short and without macrosetae. The phylogenetic relationships of this new genus with close taxa are analysed; its taxonomic position within the Typhlodrominae is uncertain.

**Key words:** Acari, Phytoseiidae, taxonomy, predatory mites, *Africoseiulella flechtmani*, Tunisia

### **Introduction**

In a previous paper (Kreiter *et al.*, 2002), we reported results of surveys carried out during seven years in five regions of northern Tunisia (North, East, Cap-Bon, Bizerte and Sahel regions), on four main crop groups: vegetables in greenhouses, apple and citrus orchards, and grapevines. We report here part of the results of a survey carried out in the year 2000 in the southern part of Tunisia, mainly in several date palm production areas, during which a new phytoseiid genus and species were found. Those new taxa are here described and the relative phylogenetic position of the new genus within in the family Phytoseiidae is discussed.