



The genus *Eremiothrips* (Thysanoptera: Thripidae) in Iran, with one new species

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Abstract

Eremiothrips bhattii sp.n. is described from Fars province, Iran. Three other species of this genus that have previously been recorded from other parts of Iran, *E. similis* Bhatti, *E. taghizadehi* (zur Strassen) and *E. varius* (Bhatti) are reported from Fars province for the first time. A key is provided for identification of the Iranian *Eremiothrips* species based on males.

Key words: *Eremiothrips bhattii*, Fars province, new record, new species

Introduction

Although the fauna of Thysanoptera of Iran is not well known (Minaei *et al.* 2007), 70% of the described species in the genus *Eremiothrips* are recorded from Iran (Table 1). The centre of speciation of this genus, that now includes 18 species with the description below of one new species, seems to be the area extending from southwestern Asia, including Iran, to the Mediterranean coastal areas (Ramezani *et al.* 2009).

The nominal genus *Eremiothrips* was first published in a key to Thysanoptera genera of the world (Priesner, 1949), but its formal description appeared one year later (Priesner 1950). Bhatti (1988) re-interpreted the genus to include 13 species, most of which were previously placed in the genus *Ascirtothrips*, however no key to species was provided. Subsequently, Bhatti *et al.* (2003) provided diagnostic character states for the genus, and listed 15 species including one new species, *E. farsi* Bhatti, from Iran. That paper also provided a key to nine species, including eight recorded from Iran, and also *E. similis* that was known only from Iraq at that time. zur Strassen (2003) provided a key to eight species of *Eremiothrips* known from Europe and the Mediterranean region, including four species from Iran. Other publications on this genus include the description of *E. zurstrasseni* based on one male from Iran (Bhatti *et al.* 2009), and subsequently *E. similis* was reported from this country (Ramezani *et al.* 2009). The key by Bhatti (2003) is based on his extensive experience of this genus, but the females of some species are closely similar to each other, and the restricted distribution of the journal in which this paper was published further limits the utility of this key to many entomologists. The objectives of the present paper are to describe a further new species of *Eremiothrips* from Fars province, in south west of Iran, and to provide a key for distinguishing the species known from Iran based on males – this being based mostly on the key by Bhatti *et al.* (2003). Host associations and structural diversity among members of the genus are also discussed. Nomenclatural details of all Thysanoptera taxa are available on the web (Mound 2012).

Host association in *Eremiothrips*

Eremiothrips is an eremophilous genus whose distribution seems largely dependent on geography rather than any specific host plant. The described species are recorded from dry areas of the Palearctic region, including northern India and North Africa. Several plant families are typical of the flora of this area, including Chenopodiaceae, Labiatae, Zygophyllaceae, Umbeliferae and Ephedraceae and probably some of them are used by *Eremiothrips* species as host plants. In addition, some plant species are known to support more than one thrips species, such as *Eremiothrips arya* and *E. taghizadehi* both found on *Dendrostellera lessertii* (Thymelaeaceae) (zur Strassen 1975). In contrast, the new species described here has been collected on a wide range of plants including *Atriplex patula*