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A new species of South American whitefly (Sternorrhyncha: Aleyrodidae) colonising cultivated bay laurel

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Abstract

Aleuroplatus biluminiporus **sp. nov.** is described here from fresh bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) leaves imported into Britain from South America. Its taxonomic affinities are discussed. The potential problems posed to the herb and ornamental plant industry by this species are considered.

Key words. Whiteflies, South America, bay laurel, *Laurus nobilis*, Lauraceae, quarantine assessment

Introduction

During the latter half of 2001, the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate found large numbers of larval and puparial stages of whiteflies on fresh leaves of cultivated bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis* (L.), variety 'Kiska'), at an importer's premises in the county of Hereford & Worcester, England. The leaves were imported for processing in food products and for sale as a fresh, excised-leaf, herb. The leaves had been harvested from plantations in savannah near Bogotá, Colombia. Examination of puparial specimens, prepared for microscopic examination, revealed the presence of two whitefly species. Small numbers of larval stages of an unrecognisable *Paraleyrodes* species were present, but most specimens belonged to an undescribed *Aleuroplatus* species, clearly belonging to a group of similar South American species (see comments following the description, below). The presence of two New World whitefly species is consistent with the origin of the imported leaves. However, the host plant species is not a South American native, originating instead in the Mediterranean region (Uphof, 1968; Harrison *et al.*, 1985).

Several other live species belonging to the hemipterous sub-order Sternorrhyncha were also present in low numbers on the imported bay laurel leaves, including two species