

A new genus and species of Australian pergid sawfly (Hymenoptera: Symphyta, Pergidae) causing damage on grass (Poaceae)

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Abstract

Dalia graminis, **new genus and species**, is described from the Darwin area in the Northern Territory, Australia. The new species belongs to the subfamily Euryinae and is most closely related to the genera *Clarissa* and *Diphamorphos*. *Dalia graminis* sp. nov. is the first record of an Australian pergid sawfly feeding on grass (Poaceae) causing severe damage on economically important crops.

Key words: Symphyta, Pergidae, Australia, Poaceae, pest species, taxonomy

Introduction

The majority of Australian species of the sawfly family Pergidae are associated with plants of the family Myrtaceae (Naumann 1991; Macdonald and Ohmart 1993). Larvae of the subfamily Euryinae mostly feed on decaying leaves or leaf-litter (Naumann 1991, Macdonald and Ohmart 1993). The only Australian pergid species which has been observed in association with grass is *Clarissa tasbates* Naumann, the larvae of which have been found on dead stems of *Poa* or under a mat of dead *Poa* (Naumann 1997, 1998). However, one larva was observed to feed on a dead *Ranunculus* leaf which indicates saprophagy. Here the first Australian pergid species with larvae feeding on fresh grass leaves is recorded.

A few Australian pergid species are regarded as pests and cause damage on economically important plants. Among the most important pest species are *Perga affinis* Kirby, *P. dorsalis* Leach, *Phylacteophaga froggatti* Riek, *Pseudoperga lewisii* (Westwood) (mainly in Tasmania), *Pergagrapta bella* (Newman), several other species of *Pergagrapta*, and, to a lesser extent, *Perga kirbii* Leach, many of them causing damage on a wide range of euca-