



A new thrips pest of *Myoporum* cultivars in California, in a new genus of leaf-galling Australian Phlaeothripidae (Thysanoptera)

LAURENCE A. MOUND¹ & DAVID C. MORRIS²

¹Honorary Research Fellow, CSIRO Entomology, GPO Box 1700, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia

²Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Botany and Zoology, Australian National University, Canberra

Abstract

A new genus of Australian Phlaeothripidae is described, *Klambothrips*, to include a new species of gall-inducing thrips, *K. myopori*, that is a pest on the leaves of prostrate and upright *Myoporum* shrubs in California. A closely related thrips, *Liothrips walsinghami* Girault, is also included in this genus. This thrips is common in the coastal regions of south eastern Australia damaging the leaves of *Myoporum insulare*. Two further Australian thrips species are also placed in *Klambothrips*, both inducing leaf distortions on plants in the Asteraceae: *Rhynchothrips annulosus* Priesner on *Cassinia*, and *Klambothrips oleariae* sp. n. on *Olearia*. These thrips are all members of the “*Teuchothrips* complex”, and molecular data is presented indicating that the members of this complex constitute a series of separate lineages, one of which comprises the four species of *Klambothrips*.

Key words: *Klambothrips myopori*, new genus and species, *Teuchothrips*, gall thrips

Introduction

In California U.S.A., a species of tubuliferan thrips has recently become a serious pest on a common urban ornamental shrub, *Myoporum*, inducing considerable leaf deformation through its feeding activities (Fig. 1). Entomologists in the USA considered that this pest thrips was not native to that country, and the possibility was raised that it might have been accidentally introduced from Australia. The plant family Myoporaceae comprises two major genera, *Eremophila* in which all 180 species are from Australia, and *Myoporum* in which most of the 32 species are Australian although with a few occurring in the area between Mauritius and New Zealand. Unfortunately, this new pest in California belongs to a group that is poorly studied, in which species and genera are equally ill-defined, this group being referred to as the “*Teuchothrips*-complex”. In describing this pest as a new species, an assessment is made of its relationships to similar thrips from Australia, and a new genus is proposed for four species that produce similar-looking irregular gall-like leaf distortions on different species of plants. This paper is part of continuing studies on the biology and taxonomy of an extensive Australian radiation of leaf-galling thrips on many different native plant species.

Host plant and damage

In California, leaf distortion by the *Myoporum* thrips described below has been reported from five counties, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Orange, Los Angeles and Ventura. There is an expectation in the horticultural trade that this thrips will spread rapidly to wherever the host is planted causing spectacular and unsightly damage. In particular, species of *Myoporum* are planted along 1000's of kms of residential and freeway road margins. Consequently, continued planting and traffic movement can be expected to facilitate the continued