



## The tetranychid mites (Acari: Tetranychidae) of Kenya and a redescription of the species *Peltanobia erasmusi* Meyer (Acari: Tetranychidae) based on males

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### Abstract

This paper reports 18 tetranychid mite species (Acari: Tetranychidae) from various plant hosts in Kenya. Four species of these belong to the subfamily Bryobiinae and the other 14 belong to the subfamily Tetranychinae. Eight of the mite species identified belong to the genera *Bryobia*, *Petrobia*, *Peltanobia*, *Paraplonobia*, *Duplanychus*, *Eutetranychus* and *Mixonychus* and are being reported for the first time in Kenya while the other ten had already been reported before. The paper provides a list of these species and their brief descriptions as well as a redescription of *Peltanobia erasmusi* Meyer (Acari: Tetranychidae) to include male characters that were not included in the original description.

**Key words:** Acari, Prostigmata, Tetranychidae, spider mites, Kenya

### Introduction

The family Tetranychidae Donnadieu, is one of the most important families of the Acari because many species can be serious pests of agricultural crops. This family comprises a large group of about 1,250 phytophagous species (Migeon and Dorkeld, 2006) and their damage has been reported in ornamentals, horticultural crops, fruit crops and some staple food crops (Jeppson *et al.*, 1975). Virtually any plant may be subject to attack and economic damage caused by spider mites because of their broad host plant range, high fecundity and rapid developmental rates (Smiley and Baker, 1995). An earlier record of spider mites from Kenya was given in the world's catalogue of Tetranychidae by Bolland *et al.* (1998), which listed 9 species from Kenya, and a more recent website 'The Spider web' (Migeon and Dorkeld, 2006) which lists 10 species. These earlier records include *Eutetranychus orientalis* Klein, *Mononychellus progresivus* Doreste, *Oligonychus coffeae* Nietner, *Oligonychus gossypii* Zacher, *Schizotetranychus spiculus* Baker and Pritchard, *Tetranychus evansi* Baker and Pritchard, *Tetranychus urticae* Koch, *Tetranychus neocaledonicus* André, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher and *Tetranychus lombardiini* Baker and Pritchard. The last record was that of *Tetranychus evansi* Baker and Pritchard in 2001 (Knapp *et al.*, 2003). This paper gives a report of tetranychid mites collected from September 2005 to December 2007 in our study. In addition, tetranychids reported before by different authors are also included and remarks on their first report added. A re-description of *Peltanobia erasmusi* Meyer and illustrations of the males are included.