



## Species of the Genus *Thrips* (Thysanoptera, Thripidae) from the Afro-tropical Region

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### Abstract

An illustrated key is provided to distinguish the 34 species of genus *Thrips* reported from the Afrotropical Region, including La Réunion. Seven new synonyms are established as a result of checking type specimens; two new species are described, *T. solari* from Nigeria and *T. kurashii* from South Africa; and the new combination *Craspedothrips ghesquierei* (Priesner) is established for a species described in *Taeniothrips*. A diagnosis is given for each species with an indication of the known distribution.

**Key words:** Thrips, Afrotropical Region, identification, synonymies, new species

### Introduction

The volume of fresh horticultural products exported by African countries to other parts of the world has increased greatly in recent years (Mwebaze, et al., 2010). For quarantine authorities of importing countries, these plants and plant products provide considerable problems. Quarantine officers are expected to identify potential pest or invasive species, although invasiveness and even pest status are not readily predictable (Maynard & Nowell, 2009). Such difficulties are increased when the products come from parts of the world such as Africa for which there is such limited information concerning the insect fauna (Nickle, 2008; Mound, 2009). A parallel problem exists for exporting countries, because there is an increasing expectation under trade agreements that exports will be certified as free of potential pests. The Thysanoptera is one particular group of insects that becomes involved in such problems. The purpose of the work presented here is thus to facilitate identification, by quarantine authorities in both importing and exporting countries, of the species of the genus *Thrips* Linnaeus that have been recorded from Africa.

### Systematic considerations

*Thrips* is the most species-rich genus of Thysanoptera, with about 250 described species worldwide (Mound, 2010). Identification systems are now available for the species of this genus from many parts of the world [Europe and Mediterranean: zur Strassen (2003); Asia and Australasia: Palmer (1992), Mound & Masumoto (2005), Mound & Azidah (2009); North America: Nakahara (1994), Hoddle et al. (2009)]. However, only one published key is available to any species of this genus from Africa (Hood, 1932), and that includes very few species and is based on a long out-dated concept of the genus.

Most thrips species from Africa named prior to 1940 cannot be recognised from their descriptions, and re-examination of type specimens for this paper has thus resulted in seven new synonyms. Moreover, for no African species has there been any studies on structural variation within and between populations. At the time that these African species were described, the genus *Thrips* and the genus *Taeniothrips* were confused. Indeed, Stannard (1968: 358) suggested that these two “grade into each other”. However, Mound (1968) indicated