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## The first discovery of the genus *Meira* Jacquelin du Val outside the western mediterranean area, with description of a new species (Coleoptera, Curculionidae, Entiminae)

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### Abstract

A new species of *Meira* Jacquelin du Val, 1852 from northeast Italy is described: *Meira mariaesilvanae* sp. n. This is the first discovery of the genus *Meira* in the northeast of Italy outside the hitherto known distribution. Ecological and distributional data are provided for the new species. Photos of habitus, some morphological details, genitalia and of the type locality illustrate the work. In addition we provide a dichotomous key to Italian species and a checklist to known *Meira* species.

**Key words:** Peritelini, *Meira mariaesilvanae* sp. n., taxonomy, ecology, phenology

### Riassunto

Viene descritta una nuova specie di *Meira* Jacquelin du Val, 1852 del nord-est dell'Italia: *Meira mariaesilvanae* sp. n. Questo è il primo ritrovamento del genere nel nordest dell'Italia, al di fuori della sua distribuzione finora conosciuta. Della nuova specie vengono fornite informazioni sulla distribuzione e sulla ecologia. Foto dell'habitus della nuova specie, di alcuni particolari morfologici, degli apparati genitali e della località tipica illustrano il lavoro. Viene inoltre fornita una chiave dicotomica per l'identificazione delle specie italiane ed una checklist delle specie di *Meira* attualmente note.

### Introduction

This work stems from passion for the natural science by the second author, which made possible an unexpected and somewhat sensational discovery of a new species of *Meira* Jacquelin du Val, 1853. This is the first discovery of a *Meira* outside of its known distribution, specifically the northern part of the western mediterranean area (sensu Vigna Taglianti *et al.*, 1999), about 200 km away from the Apennines, the nearest area from where it was previously known (Figs. 12, 13). In addition it is the first discovery of a Peritelini weevil, not of the genus *Simo* Dejean, 1821, in the northeast of Italy. The type locality (Fig. 15) of the new species is located halfway along the eastern shore of Garda Lake, at 260 meters of altitude on the gentle slope of Mount Baldo in a typical prealpine xerothermic "oasis". This unexpected finding encouraged the first author to conduct more intensive and extensive field research which led to the discovery of several additional specimens in two new places and new and interesting ecological and phenological observations. This discovery increases our knowledge about the peculiar insect fauna of the prealpine xerothermic biotope (Magistretti & Ruffo, 1959; Osella, 1968, 1970).

*Meira* is a taxonomically complex genus on which there have been a number of recently published works (Delaunay, 2011; Delaunay & Melle, 2013; Osella *et al.*, 2005; Pierotti & Bellò, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2010; Pierotti & Fink, 2013; Pierotti & Rouault, 2010; Pierotti, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Rouault, 2013; Pierotti *et al.*, 2010; Tinti *et al.*, 1994). The Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera recently published (Pierotti, 2013c) lists 16

particular the last one, suggest that evolution of allopatric taxa could be much faster than usually believed. A possible introduction as a result of human activity related to the distribution of olive trees could be suggested but this is very unlikely. In all cases it is essential to continue field research in northern Italy to improve our entomological knowledge of such important wildlife areas and biodiversity hot spots as these prealpine xerothermic “oases”.

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