



The Asian genus *Praepodothrips* newly recorded in Australia with one new species and comments on the Haplothripini (Thysanoptera, Phlaeothripinae)

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Abstract

Variation in the presence of metathoracic sternopleural sutures in genera of Haplothripini is considered. *Praepodothrips dianellae* sp. nov. from leaves of *Dianella caerulea* [Asphodeliaceae] in Southeastern Australia is described as the ninth species of genus.

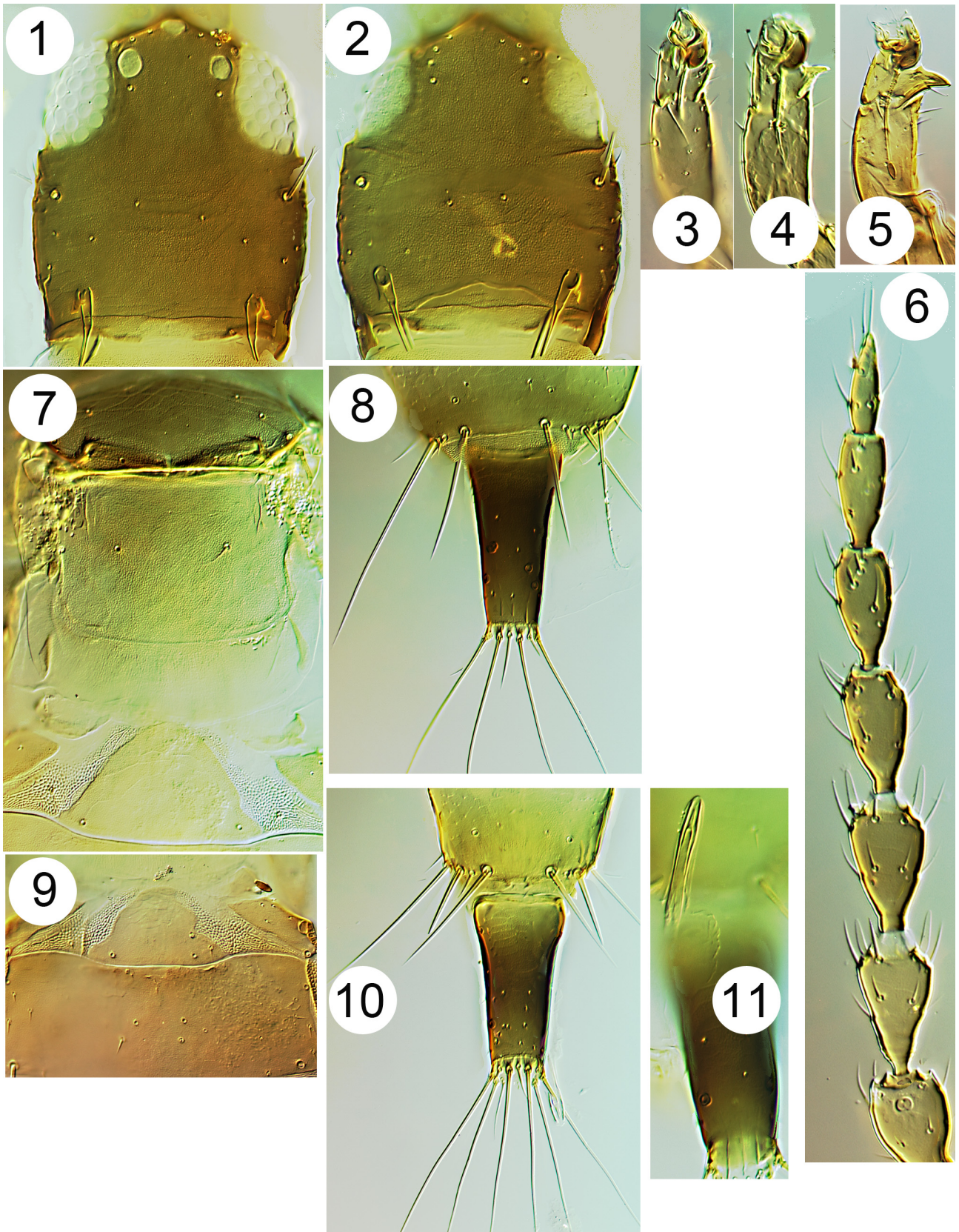
Key words: metathoracic sternopleural sutures, host plant, antennal sense cones

Introduction

In erecting *Praepodothrips* as a new genus, the authors Priesner and Seshadri (1952) included only a single species, *P. indicus*, that they concurrently described on adults and larvae from grasses in southern India. This genus currently comprises eight described thrips species (ThripsWiki 2026), all of which are recorded as living on the foliage of Poaceae, including various grasses and bamboos. Four of these species were described from India, two from southern China, one from Vietnam and one from the Philippines. However, the distributions of some species are clearly more extensive, with *P. causiapeltus* Reyes from Philippines and *P. indicus* Priesner & Seshadri both more recently recorded from Thailand (Okajima & Masumoto 2025). In contrast, the new species described here is from southeastern Australia where it was found on a narrow-leaved cultivar of *Dianella caerulea* [Asphodeliaceae].

The original authors of *Praepodothrips* indicated that this genus was close to the genus *Haplothrips* but differed in the number of sense cones on antennal segments III and IV. Moreover, as their new name implied, they also recognised a relationship to the genus *Podothrips* from which they distinguished it by the lack of a tooth or tubercle on the fore tibia. *Praepodothrips* is now accepted as a genus of Haplothripini, a Tribe comprising about 34 genera (Mound & Minaei 2007). Amongst Haplothripini genera Okajima and Masumoto (2025) recognised a subgroup of three genera, comprising *Okajimathrips*, *Podothrips* and *Praepodothrips*. This decision was based on the presence of well-developed metathoracic sternopleural sutures. However, these sutures occur in species of at least the following nine Haplothripini genera: *Bagnalliella*, *Chiraplothrips*, *Neoheegeria*, *Okajimathrips*, *Plicothrips*, *Podothrips*, *Praepodothrips*, *Priesneria* and *Talitha*. In contrast, these sutures are not known in the following 17 genera of Haplothripini, including *Haplothrips*, for which specimens or recent descriptions are available: *Androthrips*, *Apterygothrips*, *Dolicholepta*, *Dolichothrips*, *Eparsothrips*, *Euoplothrips*, *Habrandrothrips*, *Haplothrips*, *Karnyothrips*, *Leptandrothrips*, *Leptothrips*, *Mesandrothrips*, *Mesothrips*, *Neandrothrips*, *Sinuothrips*, *Xiphandrothrips* and *Xylaplothrips*.

Decisions about the metathoracic sternopleural sutures are not always reliable, because when a slide-mounted specimen is not fully distended a weak longitudinal ridge may be present in this position that obscures the presence/absence of an actual suture. Also, not all species in each genus have been seen. Moreover, in the new species described below these sutures are variable in development between winged and wingless morphs. The species listed in some genera, for example *Priesneria* and *Talitha*, may not be congeneric with their type species. Such species have been placed in these two genera because of the presence of an expanded ring sub-basally on the third antennal segment, but not all such species have a metathoracic sternopleural suture.



FIGURES 1–11. *Praepodothrips dianellae*. (1) Holotype head. (2) Head with maxillary bridge. (3) Female fore tarsus. (4) Small male fore tarsus. (5) Large male fore tarsus. (6) Antenna. (7) Female pterothorax & pelta. (8) Holotype tube. (9) Male pelta. (10) Male tube. (11) Aedeagus.

Judging from line-drawings by Pitkin (1976) antennal segment VIII of *Praepodothrips* species is often rather more elongate than in *Haplothrips* species. Indeed, in the type species (Okajima & Masumoto 2025, Fig. 190), as well as the new species described here (Fig. 6), antennal segment VIII is narrowed to the base and rather slender. Of the nine species now placed in *Praepodothrips*, the following six species have two sense cones on each of antennal segments III and IV: *cymbapogoni* Ananthakrishnan; *dianellae* **sp. nov.**; *indicus* Priesner & Seshadri; *flavicornis* Zhang; *sonlae* Okajima & Masumoto; *yunnanensis* Zhang & Tong. Two species, *causiapeltus* Reyes and *priesneri* Ananthakrishnan, have three sense cones on III and four on IV, but *nigrocephalus* Ananthakrishnan has one on III and two on IV (Okajima & Masumoto 2025).

***Praepodothrips* Priesner & Seshadri**

Praepodothrips Priesner & Seshadri, 1952: 407. Type species *P. indicus* Priesner & Seshadri.

The most recent diagnosis of this genus is by Okajima and Masumoto (2025). Whilst that clearly distinguishes the group from other Haplothripini there remains a confusing similarity in structure between the type species of *Chiraplothrips* and *Praepodothrips*. These two genera were distinguished by Pitkin (1976) only because the first has a slightly more slender head and the external apical margin of the fore femora bears a weak tooth. There seems to be a possibility that together they represent a single lineage that has diversified on Asian Poaceae leaves.

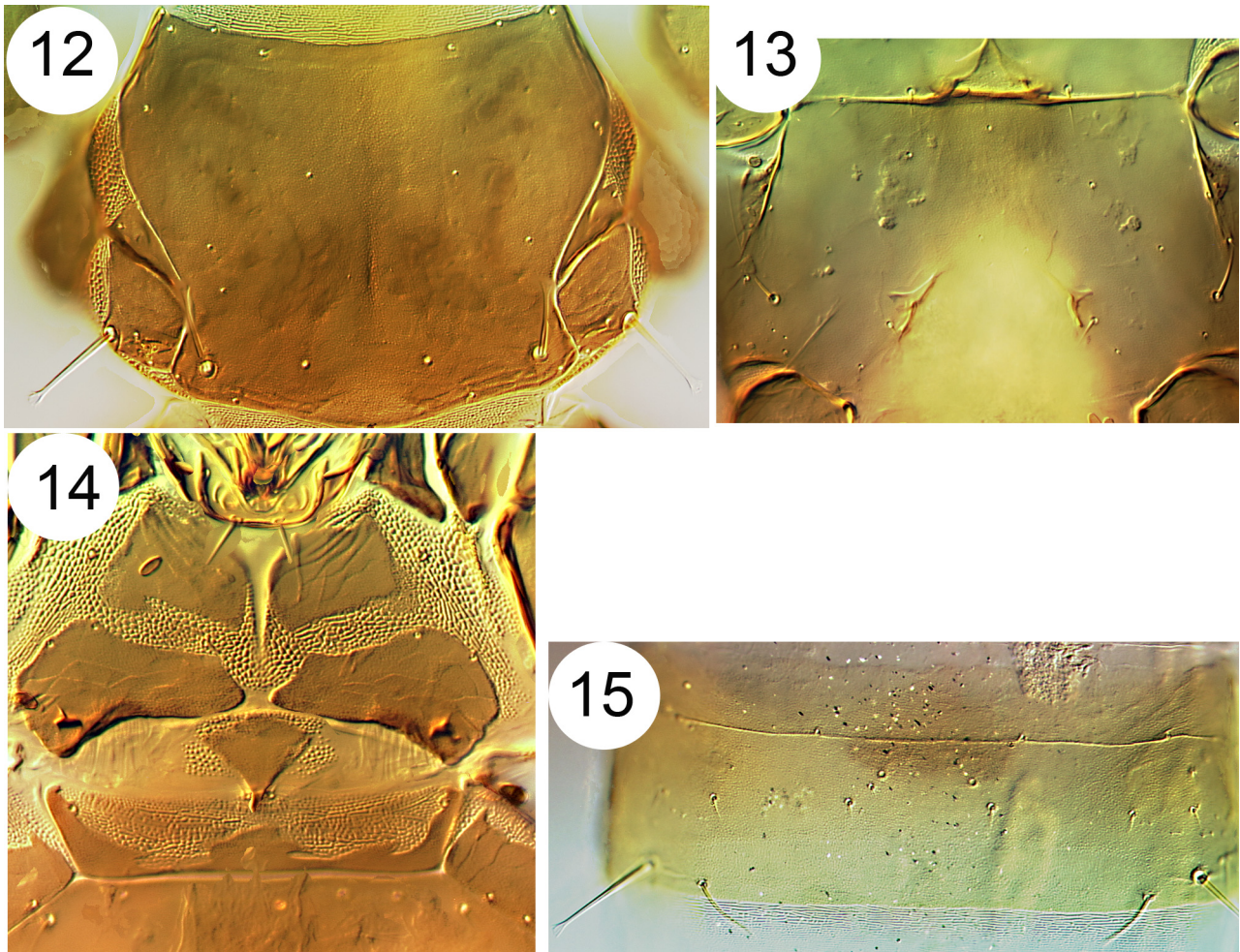
***Praepodothrips dianellae* sp. nov.**

Female macroptera (distal half of wings lost on holotype). Body bicoloured; head, prothorax and most of meso and metathorax brown, abdomen yellow but segment IX light brown and tube dark; all setae pale. Legs all yellow except basal half of fore femora brown. Fore wing light brown medially. Antennal segments I and IV–VIII light brown, III yellow also most of segment II. All body surfaces almost smooth, lacking obvious sculpture lines. Antennae 8-segmented, VIII long and slender (Fig. 6), III & IV each with 2 sense cones. Head longer than wide, with paired postocular setae arising laterally near cheeks (Fig. 1); maxillary stylets wide apart, low in head with weak bridge (Fig. 2). Pronotum with posteroangular and epimeral setae long and capitate, the other three pairs of major setae all small; notopleural sutures complete (Fig. 12). Metanotum smooth, median setae small, acute, wide apart (Fig. 7). Fore tarsal tooth present but small (Fig. 3), fore tibiae unarmed. Prosternal basantra wider than long; mesopresternum slender submedially (Fig. 14); metathoracic sternopleural sutures long (Fig. 13), furcal arms weak and wide apart without spinula. Fore wing sub-basal setae S1 & S2 capitate S3 pointed. Pelta almost D-shaped with posterolateral wings small (Fig. 7); tergites III–VII each with one pair of weakly sigmoid setae, anterior pair reduced in size on each tergite, tergite II with both setae reduced; tergite IX setae S1 acute and shorter than tube (Fig. 8). Tube shorter than head, anal setae much longer than tube.

Measurements. Female holotype (de-alate): Body length 1800. Head, length 175; maximum width 150; po setae 30. Pronotum, length 135; width 200; posteroangular seta 28; epimeral seta 40. Tergite IX setae S1 75; S2 125. Tube length 100; anal setae 150.

Female microptera. Similar to macroptera in colour and structure; head with ocelli smaller; fore wing lobe shorter than thorax width; metathoracic sternopleural sutures sometimes partially occluded; pelta variable, sometimes almost bell-shaped; tergal sigmoid setae often weak, anterior pair very small (Fig. 15).

Male microptera. Similar to female but sometimes paler with antennae almost uniformly yellow; fore tarsal tooth larger, often much larger (Figs 4, 5); fore wing lobe minute, no more than 50 microns long; pelta with small posterolateral lobes (Fig. 9); metathoracic sternopleural sutures not clearly developed; sternite VIII without pore plate; tergite IX setae S2 shorter and stouter than S1 (Fig. 10); aedeagus slender (Fig. 11).



FIGURES 12–14. *Praepodothrips dianellae*. (12) Female pronotum. (13) Holotype metasternum. (14) Holotype prosternites. (15) Female microptera tergite VI.

Comments

This new species shares most of the character states given in the recent generic diagnosis by Okajima and Masumoto (2025). The exceptions are in character states presumably associated with wing reduction. These include shape of pelta, the fewer tergal sigmoid setae, but also the reduction of metathoracic sternopleural sutures particularly in the almost apterous males. The new species shares with the type species the number of sense cones on antennal segments III and IV, and also the slender shape of antennal segment VIII. It differs in the paler colour of the posterior abdominal segments, the smaller head with stylets lower and more widely separated, and the smaller fore tarsal tooth in females.

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