

FIRST RECORD OF *GREENIDEA FICICOLA* (TAKAHASHI, 1921) (HEMIPTERA: APHIDIDAE) FROM TARTOUS, SYRIA

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[Ali, A. Y. 2015. First record of *Greenidea ficicola* (Takahashi, 1921) (Hemiptera: Aphididae) from Tartous, Syria. *Munis Entomology & Zoology*, 10 (1): 194-195]

ABSTRACT: We report the aphid species *Greenidea ficicola* (Takahashi, 1921) (Hemiptera: Aphididae) for the first time in the rolled leaf of the weeping fig tree *Ficus benjamina* L. in the coastal area of Tartous, Syria. Detailed description, distribution and biology of *G. ficicola* is provided in this paper.

KEY WORDS: aphid, *Greenidea ficicola*, first time, *Ficus benjamina*, Tartous, Syria.

The genus Greenidae comprise about 64 species, which are recorded mainly for west Asia (Sugimoto, 2008). *G. ficicola* belongs to the order Hemiptera and family Aphididae and subfamily Greenideinae (Ben Halima-Kamel, 2009). The most aphid species of this subfamily are characterized by having long siphunculi with correspondingly long setae (Halbert, 2004).

G. ficicola has been found in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Australia Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, eastern Russia, and Taiwan (Blackman & Eastop, 2000, 1994) and in Afrotropical Region (Burundi) (Remaudière et al., 1992). This aphid was also reported from Italy (Barbagallo et al., 2005), Malta (Mifsud, 2008) and Tunisia (Ben Halima-Kamel, 2009).

There is no records of *G. ficicola* in countries of West Asia, therefore the aim of this report is to record the new species of this aphid for the first time for Syria and Western Asia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Rolled leaves of 18 year-old *F. benjamina* trees were sampled in January 2014, the samples were taken from Tartous area, Al Jemaseh Center 34N 43' 55.20, 35E 58' 38.14. The Aphids were removed using a fine brush and preserved in 95% alcohol. Specimens are deposited at the Laboratory of Entomology in the Center of Tartous for Agricultural Research. The Morphology of Aphids were studied by OPTIKA stereomicroscope and aphid species were identified according to the morphological features and the provided keys from (Halbert, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Were collected 2 apterae forms of *G. ficicola* on the leaves of *F. benjamina*. These aphid species was readily recognized by the presence of setae on the siphunculi and this morphological character distinguishes all members of the Greenideini (Mifsud, 2008). The color of apterae forms is yellowish-brown to dark-brown and the body is pear-shaped, the siphunculi are dark brown, curved outwards distally and the dorsum of body covered by conspicuous. Alatae forms have an elongate body with dark-brown abdomen, and siphunculi up two-thirds of body length (Blackman & Eastop, 2000; Mifsud, 2008).

These results indicate, that *G. ficicola* was responsible to cause the damage on

the leaves of *F. benjamina* in the coastal area in Syria. The infested leaves were rolled and covered with honeydew. Similar symptoms were observed by Ben Halima-Kamel (2009) caused by the pest on the leaves of *F. nitida* in Tunisia.

The occurrence of *G. ficicola* in the coastal area in Tartous, Syria could be attributed to the wide plantation and use of *F. benjamina* for ornamentation of parks and streets and the international horticultural with Asian and Europe countries has increased in the last years increasing the probability of transporting this aphid in or on goods to new regions in the world.

G. ficicola colonize *Ficus* spp., including the common fig *F. carica* L (Blackman & Eastop, 1994, 2000), but the species were recorded from other host plants belonging to different families, including guava *Psidium guajava* L. (Myrtaceae) in India (Blackman & Eastop, 2000; Halbert, 2004) and other host plants belonging to Moraceae, Betulaceae, Juglandaceae (Ben Halima-Kamel, 2009), therefore *G. ficicola* could become a pest on fig- or guava orchards in the coastal area in Syria. For that reason, it is recommended to carry out further studies about this aphid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Author is grateful to Dr. Monia Ben Halima-Kamel (Institut Supérieur Agronomique, université de Sousse, Tunisie) for the confirmation the aphid identification.

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