

# *Thaumastocoris peregrinus*

BRONZE BUG

HEMIPTERA: THAUMASTOCORIDAE



FOREST PEST SPECIES PROFILES  
AUGUST 2012



## EMERGING PEST OF EUCALYPTS IN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE REGIONS OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.

Native to Australia, *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* is currently spreading through Africa, Europe and Latin America.



Adult *Thaumastocoris peregrinus*  
(Credit: galerie-insecte.org)

## BIOLOGY

*Thaumastocoris* are gregarious insects, with adults and nymphs occurring on the same leaf. Adults live for an average of 16 days and each female will produce about 60 eggs (Noack and Rose, 2007). The eggs are laid in black capsules on the leaves, often in a cluster that can be seen as a large black mark on the leaf (Button, 2007). Eggs hatch in 4-8 days and the total nymphal time is 17-25 days.

## HOSTS

*Thaumastocoris peregrinus* has a wide host range attacking at least thirty *Eucalyptus* species and three common commercial hybrids. In South Africa, all commercially grown eucalypts are susceptible to attack, and the pest has been reported from seven eucalypt species in South America (Nadel *et al.*, 2009).

## DISTRIBUTION

**Native:** Australia

**Introduced:**

**Africa:** Kenya (2009), Malawi (2008), South Africa (2003), Zimbabwe (2007)

**Europe:** Italy (2011)

**Latin America and the Caribbean:** Argentina (2005), Brazil (2008), Uruguay (2008)

## IDENTIFICATION

*Thaumastocoris* species are recognized by a strongly dorso-ventrally compressed and elongate body between 2-3.5 mm in length, a broad head, pedicellate eyes, and elongate conspicuous mandibular plates (Noack, Cassis and Rose, 2011). Adults of *T. peregrinus* are light brown with darker areas, and have a flattened body.

Eggs are black and laid in clusters on leaves and twigs. The crawlers and young nymphs are essentially orange, with black spots on the thorax and first abdominal segments.



*Thaumastocoris peregrinus*: males and nymphs  
(Credit: EPPO/R. Sasso)



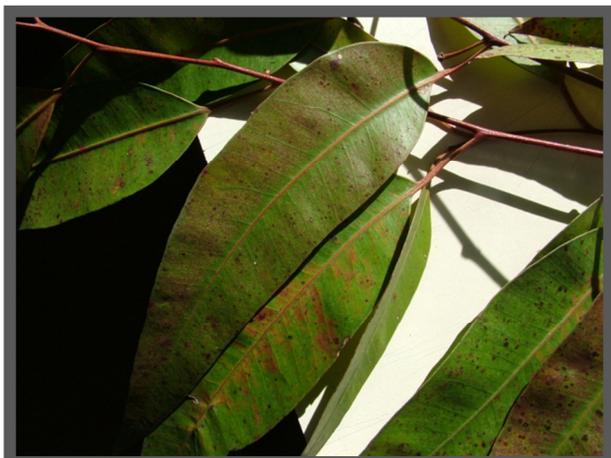
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Damage on *Eucalyptus grandis*  
(Credit: EPPO/R. Sasso)

## SYMPTOMS AND DAMAGE

The bronze bug is a sap-sucking insect that feeds on eucalypt leaves. Typical symptoms of infestation include initial reddening of the canopy leaves which subsequently changes to a reddish-yellow or yellow-brown colour (Nadel *et al.*, 2009). Some leaf loss can be observed as well as an abundance of adults, nymphs and black egg capsules usually clustered in high numbers (Nadel *et al.*, 2009). During severe infestations, leaf loss leads to severe canopy thinning, and this sometimes results in branch dieback or tree mortality (Nadel *et al.*, 2009; Wylie and Speight, 2012).

## PATHWAYS

*Thaumastocoris peregrinus* is believed to have been introduced to new areas on infested plant materials. Extreme long-range dispersal by air travel is thought to be the main mechanism for spread. The insect may also hitchhike on the clothes of travelers or be dispersed by wind.

## CONTROL MEASURES

Systemic insecticides have been found to be an effective tool for the control of *T. peregrinus*, but this approach is generally not feasible for large scale application such as plantations. The Australian parasitic wasp *Cleruchooides noackae* (Mymaridae: Hymenoptera) has been identified as a potential biological control agent, but its effectiveness to control *T. peregrinus* must still be determined. *Chrysoperla externa* (Neuroptera: Chrysopidae) was also noted to prey on *T. peregrinus* nymphs in Brazil (Wilcken *et al.*, 2010).

## REFERENCES

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