

Research Article

Some plant mites (Acari: Tetranychidae: Stigmaeidae) from Province of Tungurahua in Ecuador

Algunos ácaros de planta (Acari: Tetranychidae: Stigmaeidae) de la Provincia de Tungurahua en Ecuador

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Abstract. A survey to identify mites associated to fruit trees, vegetables, ornamental plants, and weed species was conducted between 2016 and 2017 in the Province of Tungurahua, Ecuador. In addition, the database collection of mite species from the Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Técnica de Ambato (located in Tungurahua, Ecuador) was revised. A total of 227 specimens belonging to two mite families (Tetranychidae and Stigmaeidae) were collected and identified. These mites are associated with fruit [*Fragaria x ananassa* (strawberry), *Prunus serotina* (capuli cherry), *Rubus gluacus* (blackberry), *Prunus persica* (peach tree), *Passiflora tripartite* (tacso) and *Solanum muricatum* (sweet pepino)], wood trees [*Alnus acuminata* (aliso), *Juglans neotropica* (tocte)], vegetables [*Arracacia xanthorrhiza* (white carrot), *Phaseolus* sp. (ornamental bean) , *Tropaeolum tuberosum* (mashua) and weeds [*Artemisia vulgaris* (mugworts)]. Most of these mite species represent reporting of a new host-plant association. Also, concerning some crops from the Ecuadorian Andes, geographic distribution data are presented in conjunction to the importance of mite species.

Key words: Phytophagous mites, predator mites, Andes.

Resumen. Entre 2016 y 2017 se realizó un muestreo para identificar ácaros asociados con árboles frutales, hortalizas, plantas ornamentales y especies de malezas en la Provincia de Tungurahua, Ecuador. Adicionalmente, se revisó la base de datos de la colección de ácaros de la Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato (ubicada en Tungurahua, Ecuador). Un total de 197 especímenes dentro de dos familias de ácaros (Tetranychidae y Stigmaeidae) fueron recolectados e identificados. Estos ácaros están asociados con frutales [*Fragaria x ananassa* (fresa), *Prunus serotina* (capuli), *Rubus gluacus* (mora), *Prunus persica* (durazno), *Passiflora tripartite* (tacso) y *Solanum muricatum* (pepino dulce)], árboles madereros [*Alnus acuminata* (aliso), *Juglans neotropica* (tocte)], hortalizas [*Arracacia xanthorrhiza* (zanahoria blanca), *Phaseolus* sp. (frijol ornamental), *Tropaeolum tuberosum* (mashua)] y maleza [*Artemisia vulgaris* (artemisa)]. La mayoría de estas especies de ácaros representan un nuevo registro de asociación con plantas hospederas. Además, referido a algunos cultivos de los Andes ecuatorianos, se presentan datos geográficos junto con la importancia económica de estas especies de ácaros.

Palabras clave: Ácaros fitófagos, ácaro depredador, Andes.

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Introduction

Ecuador is located on the northeast side of South America, on the equator, where 29 bioclimatic regions and 25 life zones are distributed into 4 natural regions (Coast, Sierra, Amazon and Galapagos islands) (Cañada-Cruz 1983). The Sierra region sits atop the Andean mountain range, which passes through Ecuador from north to south. In general, the Andean region presents a complex geography with wide-ranging climatic conditions; thus, it presents a great heterogeneous ecosystem which in turn translates to a high biodiversity (Josse *et al.* 2009). Beginning in the south of Colombia, the Oriental and Occidental Mountains range from north to south, forming a narrow band that is approximately 600 km in length (Clapperton 1993) and is joined by multiple inter Andean valleys that are more than 2000 m in altitude. The weather in these mountains varies according to seasonal precipitation or dryness. Even though the tropical Andes represents only 1% of the Earth's continental mass, from a biological standpoint, it contains a great variety of ecosystems, and a high level of endemism of vascular plants and vertebrates (Myers *et al.* 2000). From the total of vascular plants in Ecuador, 52.1 % are endemic to the country, with many of these plants maintaining their natural endemic distribution (Jorgensen *et al.* 2006; Valencia *et al.* 2000). Similarly, the Andean region is considered one of the world's greatest centers of plant domestication (Piperno 2011; Vavilov 1992) particularly in the highest altitudinal zones. In altitudes between 2500-4300 m, many Andean fruit species have been domesticated, including: "tacso" (*Passiflora tripartita*; Passifloraceae), "capuli cherry" (*Prunus serotina*, Rosaceae) and various "peaches" (*Prunus persica*, Rosaceae). Furthermore, the country's flora contains an extensive wealth of useful plant species such as: "wild tobacco or ashpa tobacco" (*Nicotiana rustica*; Solanaceae), "mugworts" (*Artemisia vulgaris*; Compositae) and beans (*Phaseolus* sp.; Fabaceae) (Jorgensen and Leon-Yanez 1999).

According to Fandiño-Lozano and van Wyngaarden (2005), this pattern of diversity is also reflected in arthropods, even when (to date) there is little data available. Because many arthropods are associated with plants, the extensive diversity of plants in the Andes suggests a close relationship to the diversity of the arthropods associated with these plants (Myers *et al.* 2000). A loss of habitats puts this diversity at risk due to the expansion of agricultural borders, and the unlimited use of agrochemical products. Furthering this risk has been the introduction of phytophagous species that can displace the native fauna due to the highly competitive capacity of this invasive species (de la Masselière *et al.* 2017).

In Ecuador, there are few studies available regarding the diversity of mites associated to Andean crops and related weeds. Thus, the following report attempts to offer preliminary information about mites found in fruit species, traditional crops, and common weeds from these Andean agricultural ecosystems.

Materials and Methods

A survey to identify mites associated to fruit trees, vegetables, ornamental and weed species was conducted in the province of Tungurahua, Ecuador. Monthly, samples consisting on leaves were taken from strawberry and blackberry plants which are commercially produced in Tungurahua but samples also were taken from other plant species (ornamental, vegetables and weeds) growing near those crops. Leaves showing distinctive symptoms of damage from phytophagous mite feeding were collected from April 2016 to April 2017. In each sampling site, leaves showing symptoms by mite's feeding were examined by using hand lens. Samples were placed in plastic bags and taken in ice box to the Entomology Laboratory at the Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, at the Universidad Técnica de Ambato (FCAGP-UTA). Plant material were examined under magnification to select mite morpho-species; then slides for microscopic observations were prepared using Hoyer's

medium. Finally, slides were oven dried, sealed and labeled. Mite species were determined by taxonomical keys for Tetranychidae (Gutierrez 1985) and Stigmaeidae (Summers 1966; Fan *et al.* 2016; Khanjani and Ueckermann 2008). The specimens are now deposited at the Acarology Collection from the Entomology laboratory (FCAGP-UTA). Host plants were identified by Dr. Marta Dávila, and voucher specimens are deposited at the Herbarium at the Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

Results

A total of 227 specimens belonging to three mite families were collected, including: Tetranychidae and Stigmaeidae (Table 1). These mites are associated with fruit [*Fragaria x ananassa* (strawberry), *Prunus serotina* (capuli cherry), *Rubus glauca* (blackberry), *Prunus persica* (peach tree), *Passiflora tripartite* (taco) and *Solanum muricatum* (sweet pepino)], wood trees [*Alnus acuminata* (aliso), *Juglans neotropica* (tocte)], vegetables [*Arracacia xanthorrhiza* (white carrot), *Phaseolus* sp. (ornamental bean), *Tropaeolum tuberosum* (mashua) and weeds [*Artemisia vulgaris* (mugworts)].

Family Tetranychidae

Eotetranychus lewisi (McGregor, 1943)

Tetranychus lewisi McGregor, 1943.

Eotetranychus lewisi (McGregor, 1943) Pritchard and Baker, 1955.

Examined material. *Arracacia xanthorrhiza* Bancr.: El Tambo (0766073-9848775; 2897 masl), X.13.2016, 5♀, 8♂. *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch: El Tambo (UTM: 0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), II.10.2017, 11♀, 7♂. *Phaseolus* sp. El Tambo (UTM: 0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), III.31.2017, 13♀, 9♂. *Tropaeolum tuberosum* Ruiz & Pav.: El Tambo (0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), II.10.2017, 3♀, ♂.

Distribution. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guadalupe, Guatemala, Hawaii, Honduras, Iran, Lybia, Madeira Island, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Philipines, South Africa, Taiwan, USA (Migeon *et al.* 2011; Bolland *et al.* 1998). Recently, high population levels of *E. lewisi* were observed on a purple petiolated accession of *A. xanthorrhiza*; while a lower number of this mite were registered on *T. tuberosum*, in Ecuador (Vásquez *et al.* 2017a).

Oligonychus coffeae (Nietner, 1861)

Acarus coffeae Nietner, 1861.

Tetranychus bioculatus Wood-Mason, 1884.

Paratetranychus bioculatus (Wood-Mason, 1884) Baker and Pritchard (1953).

Oligonychus coffeae (Nietner, 1861) Pritchard and Baker (1955).

Examined material. *Alnus acuminata* Kunth: El Tambo (0766423-9848657; 2 897 masl), VIII.23.2016, 10♀, 9♂. Damage caused by *O. coffeae* feeding is mainly confined to the upper surface of the mature foliage which become reddish bronze.

Distribution. Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, CIS, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Hainan Island, Hawaii, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, New Caledonia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philipines, Reunion, Samoa, Solomon Island, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tanzania, Tasmania,

Thailand, Tonga, USA, Uganda, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Wallis and Futuna, Western Samoa, Zaire, Zimbabwe (Migeon *et al.* 2011; Bolland *et al.* 1998). Vásquez *et al.* (2017b) recorded *O. coffeae* for the first time in the Ecuadorian Sierra; however, the most important fact from this finding is the possibility that this mite species could affect coffee plantations from producing areas in eastern region of Ecuador.

***Oligonychus yothersi* (McGregor, 1914)**

Tetranychus yothersi McGregor, 1914.

Paratetranychus yothersi (McGregor) Banks, 1915.

Oligonychus yothersi (McGregor) Pritchard and Baker, 1955.

Examined material. *Prunus serotina* subsp. *capuli* (Cav.): El Tambo (453588.9- 8659161; 2 643 masl), VIII.23.2017, 12♀, 5♂.

Distribution. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Hawaii, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, USA. (Migeon *et al.* 2011; Bolland *et al.* 1998). Previously, *O. yothersi* had been reported on coffee and capuli cherry (*P. salicifolia*) in Pomasquí and Guailabamba (Province of Pichincha, Ecuador), respectively. Recently, in expeditions made in Province of Tungurahua, we found this species feeding on *P. serotina* leaves in Canton of Cevallos and Pelileo. There is no commercial farms devoted to capuli cherry production in Ecuador, however, this fruit tree is widely valued since it is used for family consumption and local trading (Intriago *et al.* 2013; Palacios 2011). *O. yothersi* feeds on the upper surface mainly on mature leaves. Additionally, similar to *O. coffeae*, this species could threaten coffee plantations in Ecuador.

***Tetranychus urticae* Koch, 1836**

Acarus telarius Linnaeus, 1758.

Acarus sambuci Schrank, 1781.

Acarus textor Fourcroy, 1785.

Tetranychus telarius (Linnaeus, 1758) Duges (1834).

Tetranychus russeolus Koch, 1838.

Tetranychus viburni Koch, 1838.

Tetranychus feroxoides Koch, 1841.

Tetranychus sambuci (Schrank, 1781) Koch (1842).

Tetranychus dugesii Cano and Alcacio, 1886.

Acarus cinnabarinus Boisduval, 1867.

Acarus cucumeris Boisduval, 1867.

Acarus ferrugineus Boisduval, 1867.

Acarus haematodes Boisduval, 1867.

Acarus rosarum Boisduval, 1867.

Acarus vitis Boisduval, 1867.

Distigmatus pilosus Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus major Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus piger Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus minor Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus longitarsis Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus plumistoma Donnadieu, 1875.

Tetranychus cucumeris (Boisduval, 1867) Murray (1877).

Tetranychus eriostemi Murray, 1877.

Tetranychus fici Murray, 1877.

Tetranychus rosarum (Boisduval, 1867) Murray (1877).

Tetranychus ferrugineus (Boisduval, 1867) Murray (1877).
Tetranychus telarius haematodes (Boisduval, 1867) Murray (1877).
Tetranychus vitis (Boisduval, 1867) Murray (1877).
Tetranychus inaequalis Targioni Tozzetti, 1878.
Tetranychus bimaculatus Harvey, 1892.
Tetranychus altheae von Hanstein, 1901.
Epitetranychus altheae (von Hanstein, 1901) Zacher (1916).
Epitetranychus hamatus Zacher, 1916.
Epitetranychus aequans Zacher, 1916.
Epitetranychus alceae Oudemans, 1928.
Tetranychus textor (Fourcroy, 1785) Oudemans (1929).
Tetranychus reinwardtii Oudemans, 1930.
Epitetranychus caldarii Oudemans, 1931.
Epitetranychus reinwardtii (Oudemans, 1930) Oudemans (1931).
Epitetranychus sambuci (Schrank, 1781) Oudemans (1931).
Tetranychus fragariae Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus fransseni Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus aspidistrae Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus choisyae Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus stellariae Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus violae Oudemans, 1931.
Tetranychus manihotis Oudemans, 1931.
Eotetranychus inexpectatus André, 1933.
Schizotetranychus viburni (Koch, 1838) Oudemans (1937).
Tetranychus dahliae Oudemans, 1937.
Eotetranychus scabrisetus Ugarov and Nikolskii, 1937.
Tetranychus caldarii (Oudemans, 1931) Geijskes (1939).
Eotetranychus cucurbitacearum Sayed, 1946.
Tetranychus multisetis McGregor, 1950.
Tetranychus cinnabarinus (Boisduval, 1867) Bouderaux (1956).
Tetranychus arabicus Attiah, 1967.
Tetranychus aduncus Flechtmann and Baker, 1967.
Tetranychus ricinus Saba, 1973.

Examined material. *Fragaria x ananassa* Duht.: Huachi Grande (UTM: 0761981-9854867; 2 953 masl), IV.04.2016-VI.05.2016, Santa Rosa (UTM: 0758687-9856732; 3 108 masl), IV.11.2016 - VI.12.2016 (0766074-9848778; 2 897 masl), Montalvo (0758687-9856732; 3108 masl); IV.08.2016-VI.19.2016, El Tambo V.16.2016 (UTM: 0766074-9848778; 2 897 masl), 20♀; 12♂. *Rubus glaucus* Bentham: El Tambo XIII.15.2016 (UTM: 0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), Montalvo: XI.15.2016 (UTM: 0758687-9856732; 3 108 masl), Santa Rosa (0759368-9854836; 3 102 masl) XI.23.2016, 15♀; 10♂. *Arracacia xanthorrhiza*: El Tambo (0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), X.13.2016, 5♀; 4♂. *Solanum muricatum* Aiton: El Tambo (0766320-9848452; 2 906 masl), IX.15.2016, 6♀; 4♂. *Artemisia sodiroi* Hieron: El Tambo (0766074-9848778; 2 897 masl), III.06.2017, 7♀; 5♂.

Distribution. This mite species is worldwide in distribution (Bolland *et al.* 1998); however, information about distribution in Ecuador is still scarce. Vásquez *et al.* (2017c) reported high populations and severe damage from the two-spotted spider mite on *A. xanthorrhiza* and *S. muricatum* leaves in the Ecuadorian province of Tungurahua. Furthermore, this species is presumed to be widely distributed throughout the Ecuadorian Andes.

Family Stigmaeidae

Zetzellia silvicola Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 1965

Examined material. *Phaseolus* sp.: El Tambo (UTM: 0766073-9848775; 2 897 masl), III.31.2017, 15♀. *Passiflora tripartita*: Cevallos II.15.2017-II.25.2017, 7♀, 2♂. *Artemisia sodioi*: El Tambo (III.06.2017), 5♀. *Juglans neotropica* Diels.: El Tambo, IV.14.2017, 13♀.

Distribution. USA (Fan *et al.* 2016).

Table 1. Some mite species from plants growing in localities from Province of Tungurahua.

Mite specie	Plant species	Family	Locality
Tetranychidae			
<i>E. lewisi</i>	<i>Arracacia xanthorrhiza</i>	Asteraceae	El Tambo
	<i>Prunus persica</i>	Rosaceae	El Tambo
	<i>Phaseolus</i> sp.	Fabaceae	El Tambo
	<i>Tropaeolum tuberosum</i>	Tropaeolaceae	El Tambo
<i>O. coffeae</i>	<i>Alnus acuminata</i>	Betulaceae	El Tambo
<i>O. yothersi</i>	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Rosaceae	El Tambo
<i>T. urticae</i>	<i>Fragaria x ananassa</i>	Rosaceae	Huachi Grande, Santa Rosa, Montalvo, EL Tambo
	<i>Rubus glaucus</i>	Rosaceae	El Tambo, Montalvo, Santa Rosa
	<i>Arracacia xanthorrhiza</i>	Asteraceae	El Tambo
	<i>Solanum muricatum</i>	Solanaceae	El Tambo
	<i>Artemisia sodioi</i>	Asteraceae	El Tambo
Stigmaeidae			
<i>Zetzellia silvicola</i>	<i>Phaseolus</i> sp.		El Tambo
	<i>Passiflora tripartita</i>		Cevallos
	<i>Artemisia sodioi</i>		El Tambo
	<i>Juglans neotropica</i>		El Tambo

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