

Xylotrechus stebbingi

Gahan, 1906

(Arthropoda: Insecta: Coleoptera: Cerambycidae)



Main synonym

Xylotrechus smeii Valemberg, 2010

Common name

Unavailable.

Short description

Adults of *Xylotrechus stebbingi* have a variable length of 12-18 mm. Overall body colouration is light brown. Head and prothorax clothed with grey pubescence; the prothorax with four small brown spots in a transverse row across the middle; two dorsal and two lateral ones. Elytra subglabrous, testaceous brown, narrowly covered with grey pubescence at the base, marked with some small spots of ashy-grey pubescence which form three interrupted bands, one near the base, another just before the middle, the third midway between it and the apex; the apex also narrowly bordered with ashy grey. Body beneath is covered with grey pubescence, a rather large posterior spot on each of the metathoracic episterna ashy white. Antennae less than half the length of the body; third joint slightly longer than the first. Prothorax widest behind the middle, very slightly narrowed in front, strongly narrowed towards the base; disc with a median aspirate carina, which is broader and more strongly raised behind than in

front. Femora rather strongly thickened; the hind pair extending a little past the apex of the elytra. First joint of hind tarsi is twice as long as the second and third united.

Place of origin and global distribution

Xylotrechus stebbingi originated from Central and South Asia and has recently been introduced in the Mediterranean basin. In Europe, by the end of the 20th century the species was found in Italy, Switzerland, France and Greece. In the present century it was reported in Slovenia, Croatia, Spain, Malta, Bulgaria and Albania.

Distribution, frequency and first record for Sicily

Xylotrechus stebbingi was first recorded from Sicily by Sama & Rapuzzi (2011) from Messina. The species is now widespread and naturalised in Sicily with many records also from western Sicily.

Distribution, frequency and first record for Malta

Xylotrechus stebbingi is a widespread and well-established species in Malta with many captures since 1997 (mainly via light traps) (Mifsud & Cassar, 2024).

Habitat or preferred invading habitat

The preferred habitat of *Xylotrechus stebbingi* are wherever trees are present such as small anthropogenic woodlands, recently felled woodland and early-stage woodland and coppices.

Introduction source

Xylotrechus stebbingi is an allochthonous species which probably arrived in Europe via infested twigs of mulberry trees. The primary pathways for its transport are shipments of logs. Adults can also disperse naturally as they are capable of flight. Once established in a new environment, the beetle exhibits rapid spread.

Ecology

Little is known about the biology of *Xylotrechus stebbingi*. For sure it is a polyphagous species associated with deciduous trees. Like other longhorn beetles, it is attracted to artificial light and lays eggs beneath the bark of twigs and branches of generally sick or stressed trees.

Possible control methods

Infestations of *Xylotrechus stebbingi* can be controlled via the application of systemic insecticides in deciduous trees of agricultural relevance.

Invasive category/local potential threat

Xylotrechus stebbingi is a moderately invasive species but probably it poses a low threat to native biodiversity. Although negative effects due to damage of *Xylotrechus stebbingi* on certain trees has already been reported, a proper assessment of its impact on native trees in the Euro-Mediterranean area is lacking.

Remarks

None.

Literature

- Mifsud D. & Cassar T. (2024) A pictorial guide to the longhorn beetles (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae) of the Maltese Islands. *Bulletin of the entomological society of Malta*, 12: (in press).
- Sama G. & Rapuzzi P. (2011) Una nuova Checklist dei Cerambycidae d'Italia (Insecta Coleoptera Cerambycidae). *Quaderno di Studi e Notizie di Storia Naturale della Romagna* 32, 121–164.
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