



The Holarctic genus *Aeolothrips* (Thysanoptera: Aeolothripidae) from Iran, with description of two new species

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Abstract

Two new species of the genus *Aeolothrips* are described from northeast of Iran. *A. bhattii* sp.n. from flowering *Caroxylon dendroides* is remarkable for its strikingly bicolored body with brown head and last three abdominal segments. *A. laurencei* sp.n. from flowers of *Elaeagnus angustifolia* is characterized by its large and dark brown body, all yellow tarsi and fore wings with two brown transverse bands connected posteriorly.

Key words: *Aeolothrips*, Iran, two new species

Introduction

The order Thysanoptera includes nearly 6000 described species from nine extant families worldwide (ThripsWiki 2015). The family Aeolothripidae with about 200 species contains only 5% of all described species of Thysanoptera, and in terms of diversity, is third in size after Phlaeothripidae and Thripidae (Mound & Marullo 1998). This family includes 23 extant genera, of which *Aeolothrips* with 96 extant species is the most species-rich (ThripsWiki 2015). Aeolothripid species exhibit a wide range of feeding behavior, from obligatory phytophagy on flowers to obligatory predation on small arthropods on plants (Mound & Marullo 1998; ThripsWiki 2015). It is estimated that among 300 thrips species known to be predators, about 110 species belong to the family Aeolothripidae, including nearly 60 species in the genus *Aeolothrips* (zur Strassen 1995).

Iran is located in the Palearctic region; however some faunal elements of Afrotropical and Oriental regions exist in the southern provinces of the country. This country has a large climatic variability and diverse zoogeographical elements, the confluence of which has produced a diverse faunal assemblage. Considering this, the thysanopteran fauna should not be an exception. Despite the growing number of taxonomic studies in recent years (Bhatti *et al.* 2009; Minaei 2013b; Mirab-balou 2013), the thrips fauna of Iran remains largely unexplored, and it is expected that a large number of species remain to be discovered (Alavi *et al.* 2013a; Alavi *et al.* 2013b; Minaei 2013b). The number of aeolothripids currently known from Iran is only 24 species, while it is about 31, 45 and 200 species for Australia, Euro-Mediterranean and the world, respectively (zur Strassen 2003; Minaei 2013b; ThripsWiki 2015).

The illustrated key provided by zur Strassen (2003) treated both sexes of nearly 40 species of *Aeolothrips* from European and Mediterranean areas, including most species known from Iran. Minaei *et al.* (2001) were the first to write particularly about Aeolothripidae (including Melanthripidae) of Iran, and reported nine species including four *Aeolothrips* species from Fars province. Bhatti *et al.* (2009) gathered the scattered Iranian literature from 1938 to 2007, and listed 12 species of this genus (according to the generic interpretation of Bhatti 1988: one species belonging to *Aeolothrips*, and two and nine species belonging to *Podaeolella* and *Coleothrips*, respectively). Fallahzadeh *et al.* (2011) reported three *Aeolothrips* species from Iran, although two of these records were