

## The discovery of the Plane Tree Bug *Arocatus longiceps* Stål, 1872 (Hemiptera, Lygaeidae) at Grafton Flyford, Worcestershire.

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On 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 I swept a small approximately 6mm long red and black ground bug from an Italian Alder *Alnus cordata* at Grafton Flyford, Worcestershire SO96205574 (01). It resembled *Corizus hyoscyami* but the size and markings were different. I later compared my photographs to the images on the British Bugs website which indicated it was *Arocatus longiceps*.



01. *Arocatus longiceps*, the Plane Tree Bug 18.08.19 Grafton Flyford. Gary Farmer.

*Arocatus* was first reported in Britain from Regent's Park, London in November 2006 and Grays Inn, London in April 2007 and identified as *Arocatus roeselii*, a species resident on the Channel Islands but not mainland Britain (Nau & Straw 2007). Later in 2007 a large population of the same lygaeid was found in the gardens of the Natural History Museum NHMUK in London (Barclay 2007). However, Barclay reported that the London population did not convincingly match any specimens of *Arocatus* held in the Natural History Museum collection but did match a specimen of *A. longiceps* collected in Nice, France. Following a review of the genus (Hoffman 2008) it was decided that the name *A. longiceps* should be used in the British literature unless contradictory evidence appeared (Barclay 2009).

*Arocatus longiceps* feeds on the seeds of Plane trees *Platanus* sp., hence its name Plane Tree Bug. In Britain it has now spread to other areas, mostly in south-east England. Finding the Grafton Flyford bug on Italian Alder puzzled me and further searching of the internet brought to light the fact that another European species *Arocatus roeselii* (Schilling, 1879) feeds on alder and several sources have discussed the possibility of that species occurring in Britain (e.g. Hoffman 2008, Barclay 2009, Bantock 2014). Bantock (2014) discussed the problems of separating *Arocatus* spp. which were apparent at that time.

Due to the large amount of speculation surrounding the status of this genus in Britain at present I discussed my findings with Paul Whitehead. He suggested that the Grafton Flyford specimen is *A. longiceps* based on the hemelytral pattern in which the large black isosceles triangles almost meet and extend over the corium to the embolium. Paul has examples of *Arocatus* from England, Italy and Greece and in his view *A. roeselii* differs from *A. longiceps* in numerous ways and the matter is probably not as complex as people may have imagined although not necessarily simple. The association with *Alnus* in this case may just be a reflection of the use

made by some lygaeids of particular trees for reasons other than breeding (Paul Whitehead, *pers. comm.*).

It is worth checking plane and alder trees in the county for conspicuous red and black bugs, noting as much detail as possible and ideally keeping a voucher specimen.

### Acknowledgement

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### References

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### Image

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