

Southern Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema meridionale* and other rubbish bin surprises in Bewdley

Rosemary Winnall

I was impressed when, on 6th October 2022, I heard from Brett Westwood that the Southern Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema meridionale* had been found in Worcester, and it reminded me that I'd seen a bush-cricket in my garden in Bewdley a few weeks earlier. Thankfully I'd taken a photograph and this, together with my nature diary notes, enabled me to retrieve details of this record.

Now that we have moved to a house with a small garden, we only have a small compost bin and we put our garden rubbish in a brown wheelie bin that is emptied every two weeks. This is always a good reminder for me to do some gardening a few days before.

The brown bin had been emptied on 29th August 2022 and the next collection was to be on Monday 12th September. So on 9th September I cut the grass and trimmed my Weigela bush and overhanging Buddleia and Forsythia branches, emptying the grass cuttings into the bottom of the bin followed by the cut stems. The following day I did some weeding and as I opened the bin lid to drop these in I spotted, on the inside of the lid, a small delicate-looking green bush cricket with a missing back leg. After taking a quick photograph (01), I gently retrieved the cricket and put it onto one of my Japanese Anemones close to where I'd been cutting the day before. I did think it was a bit odd that there should be an immature Oak Bush-cricket at this time of the year with such tiny wing buds.



01. Male Southern Oak Bush-cricket *Meconema meridionale* on the inside lid of the wheelie bin, Bewdley, 10.09.22. Rosemary Winnall.

Checking the photograph a month later, I realised that I might have misidentified the bush-cricket, so sent the photograph to Gary Farmer. I was excited to hear that I'd recorded a male Southern Oak Bush-cricket on 10th September 2022 – the first local record of one from inside a wheelie bin and only the second county record (by date).

The brown bin is out ready for collection this morning as I write, so I shall pause and go and take a look. Today on the 24th October 2022 I find inside on the lid another recent UK colonist, a Privet Weevil *Otiornychus crataegi*, along with the well recorded invasive species Girdled Snail *Hygromia cinctella* (Green 1998).



02. Privet Weevil *Otiornychus crataegi*; another recent UK colonist, found in the Bewdley wheelie bin 24.10.22. Rosemary Winnall.

I also found one semi-slug *Vitrina pellucida*, six Blue-black Soil Slugs *Arion hortensis*, one Tramp Slug *Deroceras invadens*, two Rough Woodlice *Porcellio scaber* and one brown unidentified noctuid moth caterpillar. I returned them to my garden, but I can see how easily invertebrates are moved around the region by this method!

I wonder if my neighbours might allow me look in their bins too? I could record a lot more species from this wheelie bin habitat.

Reference

Green, D.M. 1998. New snail to Worcestershire - *Hygromia cinctella*. *Worcestershire Record* 4:5.

Image

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 02. Privet Weevil *Otiornychus crataegi*; another recent colonist, found in the Bewdley wheelie bin 24.10.22. Rosemary Winnall.