

## The woodlouse *Porcellionides cingendus* discovered in a greenhouse in Malvern, Worcestershire.

Karen Leonard

My greenhouse in Malvern, Worcestershire had been thoroughly neglected for two years or more. It had been used to store old pots, old bags of compost and chicken seed, and grass had begun to grow in clumps between the paving slabs. On 26.03.2024 I reluctantly began the task of cleaning it out.

I was almost immediately and gratefully distracted by a 7mm long attractively mottled orange woodlouse running quickly from between a crack in the paving slabs. My initial thought was *Philoscia muscorum*. However on closer inspection it had two distinct sections on the flagellum and a ridge across each segment of the pereon which I keyed out in the FSC guide (Hopkin 2014) to *Porcellionides cingendus* (01). On further inspection at least five other individuals were easily found in the greenhouse. I submitted my record to iRecord, which was subsequently verified by Thomas Hughes.



01. *Porcellionides cingendus* from a Malvern garden. 26.03.24.  
Karen Leonard.

*Porcellionides cingendus* is noted to be mainly a coastal species in south-west Ireland, south and west England and Wales. A search on iRecord showed no previous Worcestershire records, and a search on the NBN atlas showed one previous record of *Porcellionides cingendus* from Gloucestershire recorded by Paul Whitehead on 06.11.1987. Gary Farmer liaised with Paul Whitehead who provided information that a number of specimens were found in 1987 amongst elm logs dumped with rock and clay (not tipped in recent times and not suspected of being imported from afar), on a roadside verge in Oxenton, Gloucestershire (Whitehead 1988).

So how did this species arrive in Malvern? The most likely explanation seems to be arrival on plant material/compost or pots brought into the greenhouse a few years ago. This species appears to thrive in milder coastal areas and so the greenhouse environment may have helped it survive the harsher winter weather here. I hope to explore the land around the greenhouse in the future to see if this really is an isolated population surviving within a protected environment or whether there are other populations present outside this environment in Malvern.

There are some reports, such as that in Gloucestershire, of the species being recorded inland in unprotected environments so it would also seem worthwhile looking out for *Porcellionides cingendus* elsewhere in Worcestershire.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to Paul Whitehead for providing information about previous records in the Gloucestershire area.

### References

Hopkin, S. 2014. *A key to the woodlice of Britain and Ireland*. FSC Publications, Telford.

Whitehead, P. 1988. An important extension to the range of *Porcellionides cingendus* (Kinahan). *Newsletter of the Isopod Survey Scheme* Number 24.

### Images

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