

NEW DATA OF COMMON ASPARAGUS BEETLE (*CRIOCERIS ASPARAGI* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (COLEOPTERA: CHRYSOMELIDAE) IN LITHUANIA

ROMAS FERENCA¹, VYTAUTAS TAMUTIS^{1 2}

¹Kaunas T. Ivanauskas Zoological Museum, Laisvės al. 106 LT-44253 Kaunas, Lithuania.

²Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Studentų 11, Akademija, Kaunas distr., LT-53361

E-mail: agagutta@gmail.com

Introduction

The Lithuanian Entomological Society announced the Common Asparagus beetle (*Crioceris asparagi* (Linnaeus, 1758)) as an insect of the year in 2017.

What makes this species so important? All *Crioceris* species are oligophagous or monophagous and feed mostly on *Asparagus* plants (Schmitt, 1988). Two species *Crioceris duodecimpunctata* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *C. asparagi* are serious pests of *Asparagus officinalis* both in Europe and North America (Warchałowski, 1985; Morrison & Szendrei, 2014). Both species are widely distributed in Eurasia and North America, *C. asparagi* was introduced in Argentina and Tanzania (Le Sage *et al.*, 2008; Schmitt, 2010, Morrison & Szendrey, 2014). Northern border of distribution range of *C. asparagi* is extended more to the South than that of *C. duodecimpunctata* (Warchałowski, 1985). The data on distribution of this species in Baltic countries is highly insufficient. Only a single actual finding of this species is noted from Latvia (Barševskis, 1993). The information on first record of *C. asparagi* for Lithuania in Vilnius environs in 1840 (Fig. 1) was published by Tenenbaum in 1931, but later the reliability of this information was doubted (Pileckis & Monsevičius, 1997). *C. asparagi* was newly discovered in 2011 about 30 km to the west from Kaunas town in quite a numerous population (more than 8 adults were observed) (Bukejs *et al.*, 2012). These facts suggest the possible spread of this species to the north as it had happened with *Oxythyrea funesta* (Poda, 1761) in the last decade (Tamutis & Dapkus, 2013). The aim to prove this presumption was the main reason to suggest the *C. asparagi* as the “Insect of the Year 2017”. The general public was invited to pay attention to this interesting beetle and to collect the data on its distribution in Lithuania. The aim of this paper is to summarize the results of the current campaign.

Material and Methods

The brief instruction on identification and collecting of *C. asparagi* was published online at the beginning of the season (<http://www.zoomuziejus.lt/2017-metu-vabzdys-paparastasi-smidrinukas-crioceris-asparagi/>, <http://www.entomologai.lt/9-naujienos/64-2017-metu-vabzdys-paparastasis-smidrinukas-crioceris-asparagi>, <http://www.macrogamta.lt/lt/node/13291>). Besides newly collected data all specimens of *C. asparagi* deposited in collections of Kaunas T. Ivanauskas Zoological museum were examined. Newly collected material was also deposited therein. The photos were taken using Pentax K 500 camera, macro lens Sigma 105mm APO DG Macro and super macro

close-up lens Raynox 505.

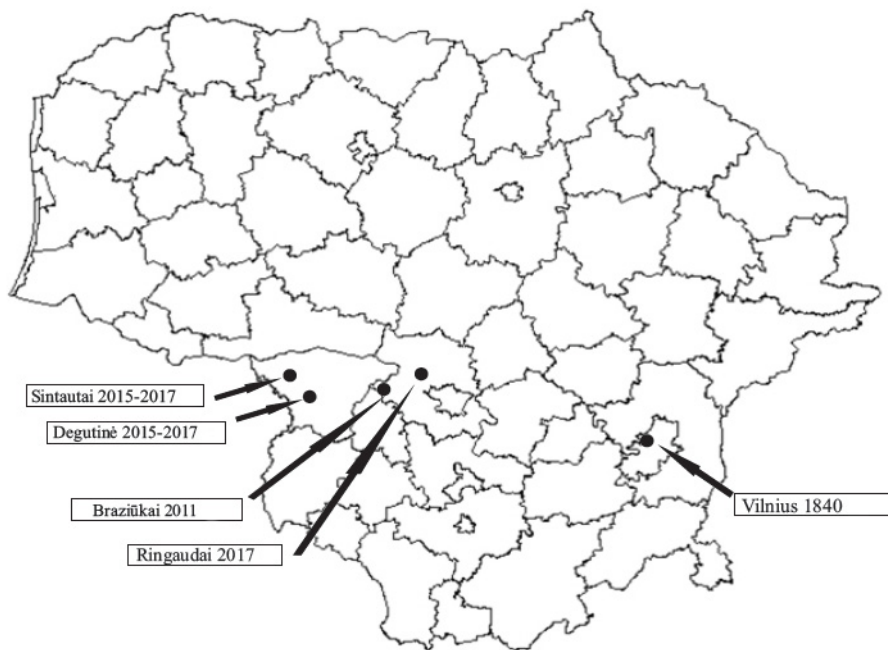


Figure. 1. Distribution of *Crioceris asparagi* in Lithuania

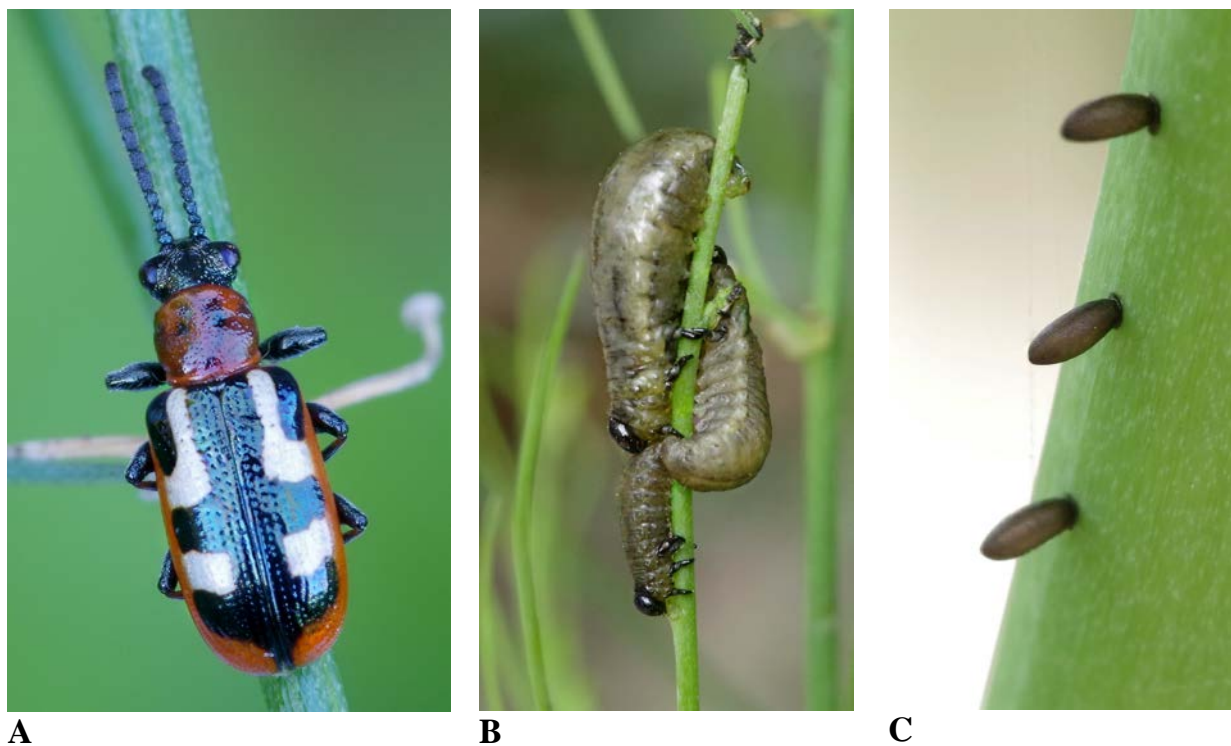


Figure 2. Developmental stages of *Crioceris asparagi* from Sintautai: A. adults; B. larvae; C. eggs (R.F.).

Results and discussion

Unfortunately this campaign was not so productive as it was expected. Only three new localities of *C. asparagi* were discovered by the first author of this publication

(R.F.) and students of Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU): Kaunas district, Ringaudai (54.89665N, 23.80185E), 30 06 2017, 3 adults (ASU); Šakiai district, Degutinė (54.81281N, 23.10698E), 25 07 2015, 12 spec.; 28 05 2016, 7 adults; 23 07 2017, at least 30 adults and larvae (R.F.); Sintautai (54.87809 N, 22.99015E), 16 08 2015, at least 20 adults (Fig. 2A), larvae (Fig. 2B) and eggs (Fig. 2C); 15 08 2016, 9 spec.; 19 08 2017, at least 15 adults, numerous larvae and eggs (R.F.).

The data show that *C. asparagi* really occurs only in two districts in Lithuania. However the observation of numerous specimens in adult, larva and egg stages continuously since 2015 to 2017 in two different but really close localities: Degutinė and Sintautai (Fig. 1) prove that *C. asparagi* is not a seasonal immigrant in Lithuania as it was proposed previously (Bukejs *et al.*, 2012). This fact indicates that part of specimens of *C. asparagi* successfully overwinter and there is a stable population of the Common Asparagus beetle in Lithuania.

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Nauji duomenys apie paprastą smidrinuką (*Crioceris asparagi* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Coleoptea: Chrysomelidae) Lietuvoje

R. FERENCA, V. TAMUTIS

Santrauka

Straipsnyje apibendrinami Lietuvos entomologų draugijos organizuotos akcijos “2017 metų vabzdys – paprastasis smidrinukas” rezultatai. Pirmą kartą ši rūšis Lietuvoje buvo rasta 1840 m. Vilniuje, antrą kartą aštuoni vabalai rasti 2011 m. Braziūkuose (Kauno r.), taip pat trys vabalai 2017 m rasti Ringauduose (Kauno r.). Nuo 2015 m. paprastasis smidrinukas kasmet stebimas dvejose radimvietėse Šakių r. Pastarieji duomenys leidžia daryti prielaidą, kad paprastasis smidrinukas Lietuvoje jau nėra atsitiktinis migrantas, kaip buvo manoma iki šiol. Tikėtina, kad bent dalis vabalų sėkmingai peržiemoja ir Lietuvoje gyvena nuolat.

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