

Western conifer seed bug *Leptoglossus occidentalis* Heidemann, 1910 (Heteroptera: Coreidae) already in Bulgaria

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Leptoglossus occidentalis Heidemann, 1910 is an invasive alien species of North American origin. The species was first recorded in Europe in 1999 in Vicenza, Italy (BERNARDINELLI & ZANDIGIACOMO, 2001). Within just a decade, the species spread to a large part of Europe, including Italy, Switzerland, Slovenia, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Serbia, Belgium, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (RABITSCH, 2008). It was expected to reach Bulgaria.

On 9 October 2008 *Leptoglossus occidentalis* was found in Bulgaria for the first time.

Material: 1 female (Fig. 1), Bulgaria, Sofia downtown, 550 m a.s.l., National Radio building, 9 October 2008, leg. N. Simov.

This is the most southeastern record of the species in Europe. *Leptoglossus occidentalis* feeds on the young seeds and strobiles of conifers: *Pinus* sp., *Pseudotsuga menziesii* also on *Picea*, *Cedrus*, *Abies* and *Juniperus* (VILLA et al., 2001), causing reduction in seed fertility. It is classified as pest in its native range (MITCHELL, 2000). Austrian and Scots pine are the most cultivated trees in the intensive forestry in Bulgaria. On the other hand, some of the coniferous trees in Bulgaria are endemics or relicts with restricted range (*Abies borisii-regis*, *Pinus peuce*, *Pinus heldreichii*, *Juniperus excelsa*). Although no economic impact is known so far in Europe, future stable establishment and mass development of *Leptoglossus occidentalis* in Bulgaria most probably will be a problem in protected areas and forestry seed zones. Future monitoring of this invasive alien species in Bulgaria is needed.



Fig. 1. *Leptoglossus occidentalis* Heidemann, 1910 – female

References

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