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A NEW BEETLE MITE FROM UTAH
(Oribatei: Gymnodamaeidae)

Harold G. Higgins¹

Hammer (1952, Acta Arctica 4:27-28) described *Gymnodamaeus ornatus* from withered leaves collected at Reindeer Station in the Mackenzie delta Northwest Territories, Canada. In recent years another species of this genus has been found in decaying leaves from several localities in Utah. This species is here described as *Gymnodamaeus veriornatus* because the markings on the dorsal surface superficially resemble those of the previous species. Sincere thanks are extended to Dr. Marie Hammer, Strodam, Hillerod, Denmark, for comparing this new species with her Canadian species.

Gymnodamaeus veriornatus, n. sp.

Diagnosis.—Large size; color reddish-brown; dorsum with a pattern of irregular ovals with roughened borders.

Description.—Propodosoms slightly wider than long, about one-third the total length, and distinctly separated from the hysterosoma. Rostrum blunt with four bristles in a straight line all of which curve over the end of the rostrum. Pesudostigmata heavy, cup-shaped. Pseudostigmatic organs about the same length as the distance be-

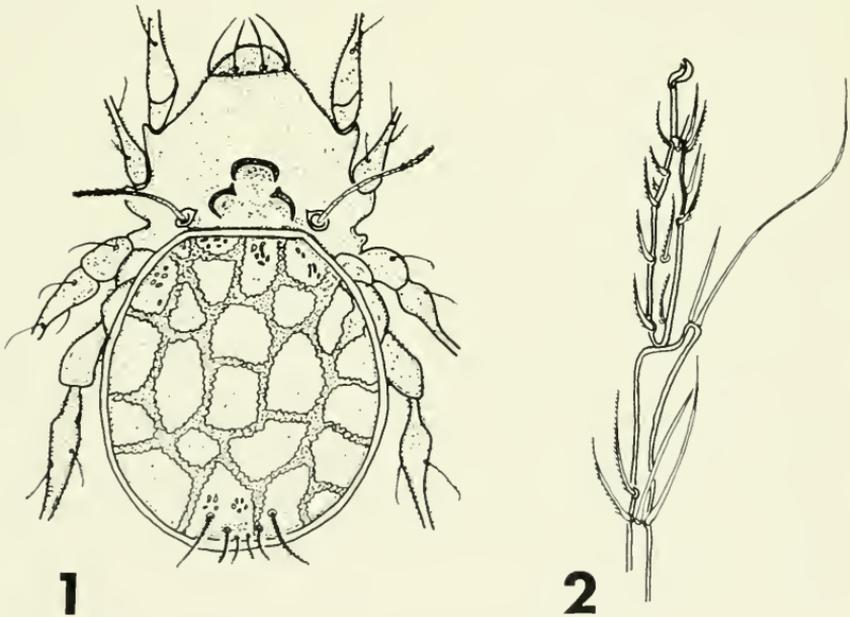


Fig. 1. *Gymnodamaeus veriornatus* n. sp., from dorsal aspect.

Fig. 2. Distal segment of leg I.

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tween them, becoming only slightly larger toward the tip and covered with fine hair-like bristles. Interlamellar hairs apparently missing. There are several heavy, curved chitin ridges between and anterior to the pseudostigmata as shown in Fig. 1.

Hysterosoma oval, with three pair of setae near the distal margin. The anterior pair of bristles is longest and curve slightly outward over the posterior end of the body; the two posterior pairs of setae much shorter and may be almost cemented to the posterior edge of the body by a granular secretion. Several irregular groupings of areae porosae are found along the anterior border of the hysterosoma and in the vicinity of the setae. Dorsal surface with a distinct, but irregular pattern of ovals with roughened borders.

Ventral surface of propodosoma and hysterosoma separated by distinct chitin ridges. Camerostome oval. Tectopodia I and II strong and pointed. Genital and anal plates touching along their entire margin; genital plates nearly as wide as long, with flattened sides, and about two-fifths the length of the larger anal plates. A heavy chitin ridge lies just anterior to the genital plate and then curves distally before extending to the region of legs IV.

Legs long, not conspicuously swollen. Leg IV about as long or slightly longer than body, but much longer than leg I. Leg I with distal tip of tibia projecting over tarsus; projecting tibia with two long setae the longest of which extends beyond the end of leg. Legs with three claws born on a stalk, the middle claw largest.

The entire body is covered with a veil of granular secretion.

Length of type, 0.93 mm.; width 0.54 mm. Five Utah specimens have the following minimum, average, and maximum measurements: Length, 0.84, 0.89, 0.93 mm.; width, 0.50, 0.52, 0.54 mm.

The type specimen was taken from decaying aspen leaves, *Populus tremuloides*, Farmington Canyon, Davis County, Utah, August 2, 1956, by J. R. Higgins. Six additional specimens from Lost Lake, Wasatch National Forest, Wasatch County, August 2, 1954.

Discussion.—Mites of this species have been found in decaying deciduous leaves at several locations in Utah at elevations above 7,000 feet. In the small collection at hand, there appears to be considerable individual variation in this species, especially in the length of legs, dorsal patterns of hysterosoma and propodosoma, and size, number, and location of areae porosae.

This species is easily separated from *G. ornatus* Hammer by its larger size, completely touching genital and anal plates, proportionally shorter pseudostigmatic organs, and its dorsal pattern with roughened borders.