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A LARVA OF TRICHODES ORNATUS FROM A POLLEN TRAP ON A HIVE OF HONEY BEES

William P. Nye and George E. Bohart[1]

An apparently full-grown larva of Trichodes ornatus (Say) was found in December, 1950, in a tight honey tin containing stored pollen. In June of the same year this pollen was taken from a pollen trap on a hive of honey bees at North Logan, Utah. It is reasonably certain that the clerid larva was subsequently transferred from the pollen trap into the can of pollen.

Linsley and MacSwain,[2] who studied the life history of this clerid, found no records of it as an inhabitant of honey bee hives, although Trichodes aspiarius (L.) has been recorded but not verified as a hive inhabitant in Europe. The known hosts of T. ornatus include a number of genera of solitary bees and also Odynerus and Pseudomasaris in the Vespidae. Linsley and MacSwain found that the larvae were able to complete their growth on Odynerus prepupae in five weeks but required 17 weeks to develop on pollen.

It is known that as an adult this clerid inhabits flowers (especially composites), where it feeds on pollen and living insects and oviposits on the undersides of the capitula. The first-instar larvae presumably attach themselves to visiting Hymenoptera and are carried back to the nests. The larva found in the can of pollen was probably carried to the hive in this manner and then scraped off by the pollen trap screen. It seems surprising that Trichodes larvae do not more frequently become established in honey bee colonies.

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1. U.S.D.A., Agr. Res. Adm., Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine in cooperation with the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

2. Linsley, E. G., and J. W. MacSwain. Observations on the life history of Trichodes ornatus (Coleoptera, Cleridae), a larval predator in the nests of bees and wasps. Ann. Ent. Soc. Amer. 36 (4) : 589-601. 1943