Family Aeolothripidae

Reference: Mound, Morison, Pitkin & Palmer (1976) Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects Vol. 1, Part 11. Now out of print and available online under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 2.0 licence.
https://www.royensoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Vol01_Part11.pdf

Check List

Genus ***Aeolothrips***
- ***albicinctus*** Haliday 1836
- ***ericae*** Bagnall, 1920
- ***intermedius*** Bagnall 1934
- ***melaleucus*** Haliday 1852
- ***tenuicornis*** Bagnall, 1926
- ***versicolor*** Uzel, 1895
- ***vittatus*** Haliday 1836

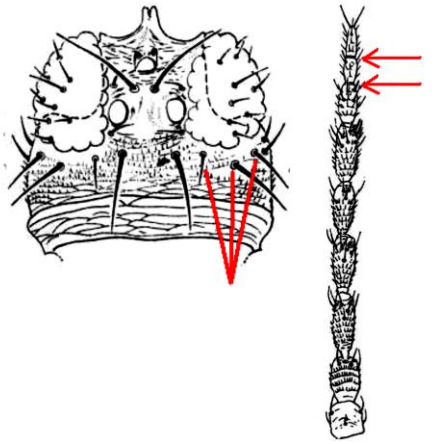
Genus ***Melanthrips*** Haliday, 1836
- ***ficalbii*** Buffa, 1907
- ***fuscus*** (Sulzer, 1776)

Genus ***Rhipidothrips*** Uzel, 1895
- ***gratiosus*** Uzel, 1895

The members of this family have the following combination of characters:
- two long veins on the wings running from the base to near the tip and a third shorter one near the wing base
- small setae on the veins and numerous microscopic hairs
- antennae usually of 9 segments (occasionally 10) - with at least segments 7-9 appear combined forming a single unit
- last part of the abdomen follows general outline of the abdomen
- ovipositor saw-like
- trichomes absent
- front wings broad and rounded at the tip rather than pointed

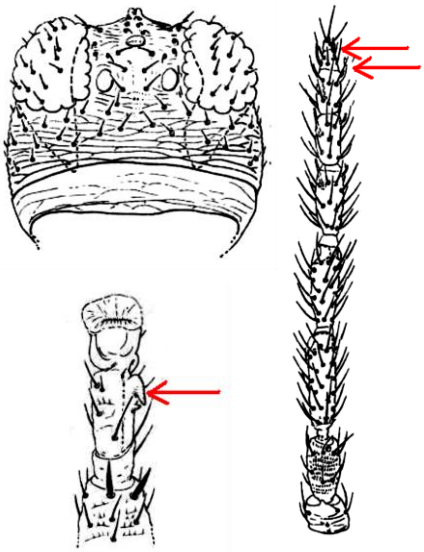
1 Head with at least 2 pairs of long setae behind the eyes. Antennae with segments 7-9 distinctly separated. Labial palps 2-segmented. Second segment of the tarsus without a claw-like tooth. Genus ***Melanthrips***. 2

The palps arise from the base of the head and are best viewed from the side.



Head with no long setae behind the eyes. Antennae with segments 7-9 closely united. Labial palps 4-segmented. Second segment of the tarsus with a claw-like tooth. 3

The last segment of the palps is very small and the first one difficult to see due to the curve of the head

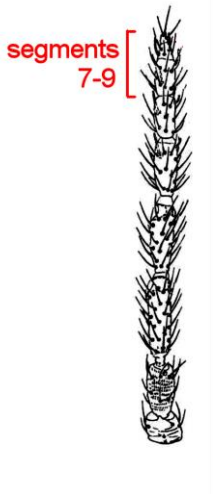


2 Front wing with two dark transverse bands. .... ***Melanthrips ficalbii***
On flowers, especially *Galium aparine, Galium mollugo* and *Reseda lutea*; locally common

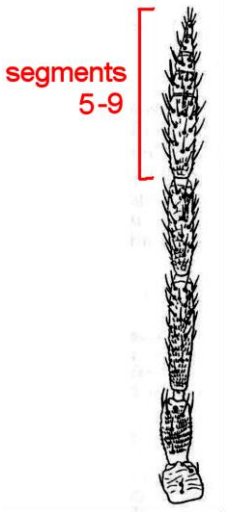
Front wing uniformly greyish brown except for a paler area near the base. .... ***Melanthrips fuscus***
On flowers, especially *Sinapsis arvensis, Brassica* species and *Poterium sanguisorba*; sometimes common in southern England.

3 Pronotum with a pair of elongate posteroangular setae. Antennae with segments 7-9 closely united. .... ***Rhipidothrips gratiosus***

On *Avena sativa*; collected infrequently in southern England. In this species the second and third segments are both pale and the prothorax is paler than the head and pterothorax and the middle and hind tibiae are yellow towards the base and the tip. A second species has been occasionally recorded near the south east coast; *R. brunneus* has the second segment darker than the third, the head, prothorax and pterothorax are all the same colour and the middle and hind tibiae are yellow only towards the tip.



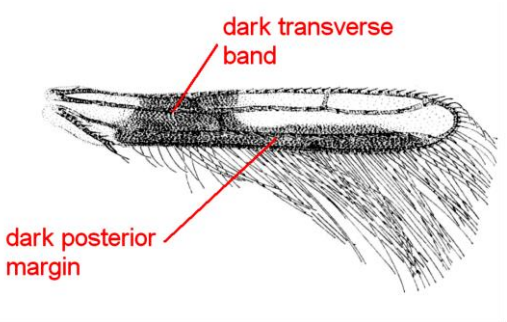
Pronotum without prominent posteroangular setae. Antennae with segments 5-9 closely united. Genus ***Aeolothrips***. 4



4 Abdominal segments 2-3 (and front part of segment 4 in males) white in life but colourless in slide mounted specimens, contrasting with dark brown of rest of body. Females - abdominal tergite 1 with numerous transverse striae. Males - abdominal tergite 9 simple, without claspers or strong curved setae. Wings usually reduced to 60 µm in females, 15 µm in males. .... ***Aeolothrips albicinctus***
At the base of grass tussocks, probably predaceous; locally abundant in southern Britain

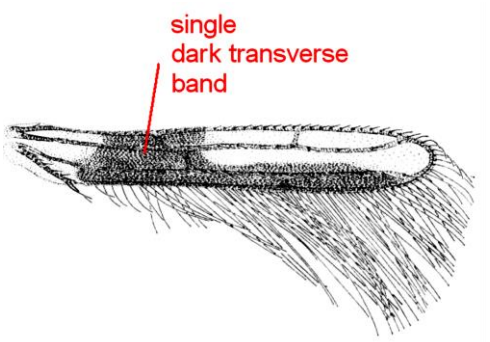
Abdominal segments 2-3 brown, as dark as head and thorax. Both sexes always fully winged. 5

5 Posterior margin of front wing dark except at the base and tip; front wing with one or two transverse dark bands. 6



Posterior margin of front wing pale in the middle between the two dark cross bands. 8

6 Front wing with a single transverse dark band. ..... ***Aeolothrips vittatus***
On *Pinus*, probably predaceous; widespread but not common



Front wing with two transverse dark bands, pale area in between sometimes very reduced. 7

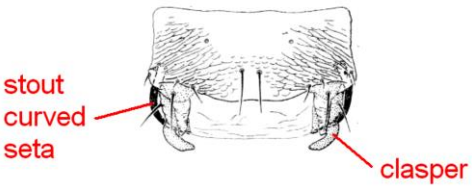
7 Antennal segments 3-4 yellow in contrast to 5-9 which are brown; tarsi and apices of tibiae yellow.
..... ***Aeolothrips versicolor***
On *Fraxinus* and other deciduous trees; predatory on thrips and other small arthropods. Uncommon; only females have been recorded in Britain

Antennal segment 3 yellow, but at least apical half of 4 brown; mid and hind tarsi and tibiae brown, front tarsi and apices of front tibiae paler
..... ***Aeolothrips melaleucus***
On *Quercus, Sambucus* flowers, and other deciduous trees; predatory on thrips, mites and probably other small arthropods. Widespread in southern England, but not common; only females have been recorded in Britain.

8 Ring vein around apex of front wing darker than the membrane it surrounds, usually as dark as the veins in the transverse dark bands.
..... ***Aeolothrips tenuicornis***

Ring vein around apex of front wing as pale as the membrane it surrounds, much paler than the veins in the transverse dark bands. 9

9 Antennal segments 1-2 yellow, as pale as the base of segment 3. Female abdomen variable in colour, segments 3-4 and 10 frequently pale. Male tergite 9 with paired claspers and a pair of stout curved setae. .... ***Aeolothrips ericae***
Particularly on Ericaceae and Leguminosae; widespread and fairly common.



First and most of the second segment of the antennae brown, darker than segment 3. Female abdomen brown. Male tergite 9 with paired claspers but without curved setae. .... ***Aeolothrips intermedius***
Particularly on yellow flowered Cruciferae, Leguminosae and Compositae; common in southern England. The photograph was of a specimen cleared in alkali, neutralised and then placed in glycerine. Before putting in the glycerine the shape was much slimmer so it seems better to photograph in the preceding solutions.