

The dark-red spider mite, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher (Acari: Tetranychidae) – a new pest in Serbian acarofauna

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SUMMARY

The dark-red spider mite, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher (Acari: Tetranychidae), is a highly polyphagous species and an important pest of economic plants belonging to the families Cucurbitaceae, Malvaceae, Fabaceae and Solanaceae, and growing in tropical and subtropical regions. In the Western Palaearctic, its distribution reports have recently come mostly from the Mediterranean Basin, i.e. Portugal, Spain, Italy and Israel. In a survey conducted in Serbia 2019–2021 (comprising 159 sampling locations), *T. ludeni* was found at 89 locations on 27 plant species of the families Rosaceae (8), Solanaceae (6), Cucurbitaceae (4), Fabaceae (2), Amaranthaceae (2), Asteraceae (2), Apiaceae (1), Convolvulaceae (1) and Poaceae (1). The dark-red spider mite was found in mixed populations with other spider mites (mostly *Tetranychus urticae* and *T. turkestanii*) in around half of the sampling locations. Heavy infestation and visible symptoms of injury were observed in several locations. Three Rosaceae plant species, plum (*Prunus domestica*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*) were its new hosts. Serbian records of *T. ludeni* from locations situated at latitudes between 42°N and 46°N were the northernmost distribution records of this species in the Western Palaearctic.

Keywords: spider mites, *T. ludeni*, plant pest, distribution, Serbia

INTRODUCTION

The dark-red spider mite, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher (Acari: Tetranychidae), is a highly polyphagous species and an important pest of economic plants belonging to the families Cucurbitaceae, Malvaceae, Fabaceae and

Solanaceae. This species is also known as the red-legged spider mite and the bean red mite. Although its original description was based on specimens collected in Germany (Zacher, 1913), and a later report from France (Hardouin, 1934), *T. ludeni* is now considered to be a species of tropical origin (Vacante, 2016; Migeon & Dorkeld, 2022).

In the Western Palaearctic, distribution reports of *T. ludeni* have recently come mostly from the Mediterranean Basin, i.e. the Azores, Madeira, Canaries, central and southern parts of Portugal, Spanish Mediterranean coast, Sicily and Israel (Hurtado et al., 2008; Ben-David et al., 2013; Ragusa et al., 2019; Naves et al., 2021). Over the last 50 years, the dark-red spider mite has also been reported in Greece, Egypt and Morocco (Migeon & Dorkeld, 2022). In a recent survey, this species was recorded in Serbia for the first time.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Mite sampling was carried out in 159 locations across Serbia from April to October over the period 2019-2021. We chose plants with obvious symptoms of spider mite infestation, as well as some plants typical for that sampling location, and also host plants preferred by spider mites. Mite population size was ranked as small (+), moderate (++) and large (+++). Geographical coordinates, altitudes, host plants and dates of collection were recorded for each sample. Each host plant was assigned to corresponding habitat type according to EUNIS classification of habitat types (Davies et al., 2004). Mites were hand-picked directly from plants, using a paint brush, or mites were extracted from leaf samples in the laboratory by the soaking-washing-filtering method. All specimens were temporarily preserved in 70% ethyl alcohol and then cleared in lactic acid (50%) for 24-48 hours and mounted in Hoyer's medium. Mites were examined using a Leica DMLB II phase contrast microscope and measured using the imaging software Perfect Image® (Clara Vision) coupled with ProgRes® Capture Pro 2.6 software for image acquisition.

A catalogue of Bolland et al. (1998) was used for sample identification to the genus level. We also used several other relevant keys, books and papers for species identification (Pritchard & Baker, 1955; Reck, 1959; Baker & Pritchard, 1960; Meyer, 1987; Vacante, 2016). Identification was confirmed by Philippe Auger and Alain Migeon of the CBGP-INRA, Montpellier, France.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification of *T. ludeni* was based on both male and female morphological characters. *T. ludeni* females are mostly dark red, their legs and gnathosoma are paler than the rest of the body. The female also has empodia I-IV with dorsal spur minute or absent, and tarsus I with sockets of zero tactile setae entirely proximal to the socket of the proximal duplex but with four overlapping tactile setae. Pregenital striae are longitudinal and with anterior band of broken striae peritreme with long hook. The male has empodia I-IV with obvious dorsal spur above proximoventral hairs, empodia I with proximoventral hairs fused to form ventral claw, and peritremes are as in females, with recurved hook. The main diagnostic character is the aedeagus, which is dorsally directed, with very short neck and small knob, and specific triangular anterior projection; posterior projection is absent and ventral margin of shaft evenly curved (Figure 1).

The dark-red spider mite was found at 89 sampling locations across the country (Figure 2). Mites were collected in various types of habitat (Table 1A-C), mostly in regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats. The species was found together with other spider mites (mostly *Tetranychus urticae* and *T. turkestani*) at around half of the locations (Tables 1A-C).

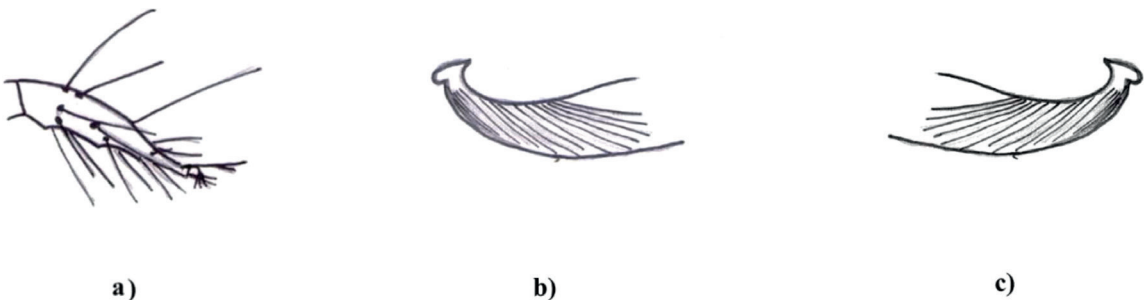


Figure 1. a) tarsus I (female); b, c) male aedeagus, different projections

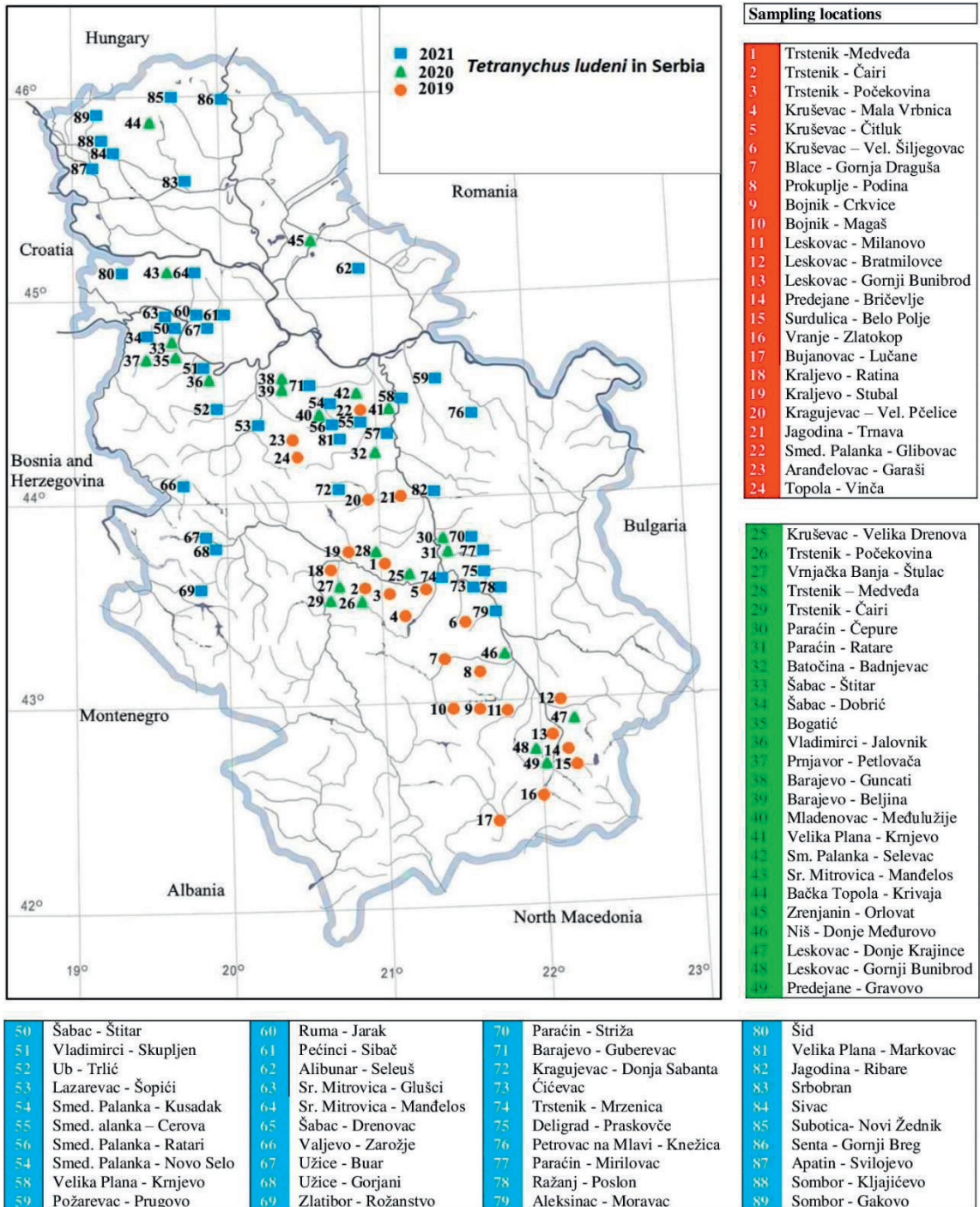


Figure 2. Distribution of *Tetranychus ludeni* in Serbia 2019 -2021

Table 1A. Distribution records of *Tetranychus ludeni* in Serbia in 2019

No.	Sampling locations (see Figure 1)	Host plants (see Table 2)	Habitat codes	Population size	Other spider mite species
1.	Trstenik - Medveđa	10	I1.1	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
2.	Trstenik - Čairi	9	I1.2	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
3.	Trstenik - Počekovina	10	I1.2	+	
4.	Kruševac - Mala Vrbnica	16, 17	I1.1	+++	
5.	Kruševac - Čitluk	15, 16	I1.1	+	
6.	Kruševac - Veliki Šiljegovac	9	I1.1	+	<i>T. turkestanii</i>
7.	Blace - Gornja Draguša	9	I1.2	+	
8.	Prokuplje - Podina	16	I1.2	+++	
9.	Bojnik - Crkvice	14	I1.2	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
10.	Bojnik - Magaš	24	I1.1	++	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>E. pruni</i>
11.	Leskovac - Milanovo	11	I1.1	+	
12.	Leskovac - Bratmilovce	25	I1.2	+	
13.	Leskovac - Gornji Bunibrod	14, 16	I1.2	++	
14.	Predejane - Bričevlje	9, 14	I1.2	+	
15.	Surdulica - Belo Polje	9	I1.1	+	
16.	Vranje - Zlatokop	14	I1.1	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
17.	Bujanovac - Lučane	9, 14	I1.1	++	
18.	Kraljevo - Ratina	9, 14	I1.3	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
19.	Kraljevo - Stubal	9	I1.1	+	
20.	Kragujevac - Velike Pčelice	14, 16	I1.2	+	
21.	Jagodina - Trnava	9	I1.2	+	
22.	Sm. Palanka - Glibovac	7	I1.1	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
23.	Arandjelovac - Garaši	21	I1.2	++	<i>P. citri</i> , <i>E. carpini</i>
24.	Topola - Vinča	21	I1.1	+	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>E. pruni</i>

I Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats: I1.1 = Intensive unmixed crops; I1.2 = Mixed crops of market gardens and horticulture; I1.3 = Arable land with unmixed crops grown by low-intensity agricultural methods

Table 1B. Distribution records of *Tetranychus ludeni* in Serbia in 2020

No.	Sampling locations (see Figure 1)	Host plants (see Table 2)	Habitat codes	Population size	Other spider mite species
25.	Kruševac - Velika Drenova	9	I1.2	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
26.	Trstenik - Počekovina	9	I1.2	+++	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>T. turkestanii</i>
27.	Vrnjačka Banja - Štulac	9, 16	I1.1	+++	<i>T. turkestanii</i> , <i>T. evansi</i>
28.	Trstenik - Medveđa	9	I1.1	+	
29.	Trstenik - Čairi	10	I1.1	+++	
30.	Paraćin - Čepure	7	I1.1	+	
31.	Paraćin - Ratare	9	I1.3	+	
32.	Batočina - Badnjevac	8	I2.3	+	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>T. evansi</i>
33.	Šabac - Štitar	7	J2.4	+	<i>T. evansi</i>
34.	Šabac - Dobrić	9	J2.4	++	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>T. turkestanii</i>
35.	Bogatić	9	I1.2	++	<i>T. turkestanii</i>
36.	Vladimirci - Jalovnik	5, 9	I1.2	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
37.	Prnjavor - Petlovača	11	I1.2	+	
38.	Barajevo - Guncati	19	I2.3	+	
39.	Barajevo - Beljina	9	J2.4	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
40.	Mladenovac - Međulužje	9, 11	J2.4	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
41.	Velika Plana - Krnjevo	11	I1.1	+++	
42.	Sm. Palanka - Selevac	7	I1.1	+	
43.	Sremska Mitrovica - Mandelos	10	I1.1	+	
44.	Bačka Topola - Krivaja	10	I2.3	+	
45.	Zrenjanin - Orlovat	9, 10	I1.3	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
46.	Niš - Donje Međurovo	9	I1.1	+++	
47.	Leskovac - Donje Krajince	9	I1.1	+	
48.	Leskovac - Gornji Bunibrod	9, 10	I1.1	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
49.	Predejane - Gravovo	11	I1.2	+	<i>T. turkestanii</i>

I Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats: I1.1 = Intensive unmixed crops; I1.2 = Mixed crops of market gardens and horticulture; I1.3 = Arable land with unmixed crops grown by low-intensity agricultural methods; I2.3 = Recently abandoned garden areas. **J = Constructed, industrial and other artificial habitats:** J2.4 = Agricultural constructions

Table 1C. Distribution records of *Tetranychus ludeni* in Serbia in 2021

No.	Sampling locations (see Figure 1)	Host plants (see Table 2)	Habitat codes	Population size	Other spider mite species
50.	Šabac - Štitar	2, 7, 9, 10	I1.2	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
51.	Vladimirci - Skupljen	2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13	I1.2	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
52.	Ub - Trlič	2, 9	I1.2	+	
53.	Lazarevac - Šopići	4, 6, 13	I2.2	++	
54.	Smederevska Palanka - Kusadak	2, 10, 11, 19	J2.4	++	
55.	Smederevska Palanka - Cerova,	7, 11	J2.4	++	<i>T. turkestanii</i>
56.	Smederevska Palanka - Ratari	6, 7, 11	J2.4	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
57.	Smederevska Palanka - Novo Selo	9, 10	I1.2	+	
58.	Velika Plana - Krnjevo	2, 3, 9	J2.4	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
59.	Požarevac - Prugovo	1, 6	I1.3	++	
60.	Ruma - Jarak	7	I1.1	++	
61.	Pećinci - Sibač	1, 6, 19	I1.1	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
62.	Alibunar - Seleuš	10, 11	I1.2	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
63.	Sremska Mitrovica - Glušci	7, 9, 11	J2.4	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
64.	Sremska Mitrovica - Mandelos	6, 8, 9	J2.4	+++	
65.	Šabac - Drenovac	7, 8, 9, 11	I1.1	++	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>T. turkestanii</i>
66.	Valjevo - Zarožje	1, 6	I1.3	+	
67.	Užice - Buar	8, 10	I1.2	+++	
68.	Užice - Gorjani	1, 7	I1.3	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
69.	Zlatibor - Rožanstvo	9, 10, 11	I1.3	+	
70.	Paraćin - Striža	2, 3, 7, 10, 11	I1.2	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
71.	Barajevo - Guberevac	7, 19	I1.3	++	
72.	Kragujevac - Donja Sabanta	2, 3, 6, 8, 9	J2.4	+	
73.	Ćićevac	8, 9, 12, 18, 27	J2.4	+	
74.	Trstenik - Mrzenica	7, 9, 11	I1.1	+	
75.	Deligrad - Praskovče	20, 22, 23	I1.1	+++	<i>T. urticae</i>
76.	Petrovac na Mlavi - Knežica	2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 18	I1.1	+	
77.	Paraćin - Mirilovac	9, 12, 19	J2.4	+	<i>T. urticae</i> , <i>T. turkestanii</i>
78.	Ražanj - Poslon	7, 9, 10, 19	I1.1	++	
79.	Aleksinac - Moravac	7, 10	I1.1	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
80.	Šid	7, 16	I1.2	+	
81.	Velika Plana - Markovac	20, 21, 26	I1.1	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
82.	Jagodina - Ribare	7, 9, 10, 11, 12	I1.1	++	<i>T. urticae</i>
83.	Srbobran	8, 10, 11, 27	I2.1	+	<i>T. urticae</i>
84.	Sivac	9, 16, 18	I1.1	+	<i>T. turkestanii</i>
85.	Subotica - Novi Žednik	2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 19	J2.4	+	
86.	Senta - Gornji Breg	5, 6	J2.4	+	
87.	Apatin - Svilojevo	8, 10, 16	J2.4	++	<i>T. turkestanii</i>
88.	Sombor - Kljajićevo	7, 16	I2.2	+	
89.	Sombor - Gakovo	9, 10, 16	I2.2	+	<i>T. urticae</i>

I Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats: I1.1 = Intensive unmixed crops; I1.2 = Mixed crops of market gardens and horticulture; I1.3 = Arable land with unmixed crops grown by low-intensity agricultural methods; I2.1 = Large scale ornamental garden areas; I2.2 = Small-scale ornamental and domestic garden areas; **J = Constructed, industrial and other artificial habitats:** J2.4 = Agricultural constructions

This spider mite species was found on 27 host plant species of nine plant families (Table 2): Rosaceae (8), Solanaceae (6), Cucurbitaceae (4), Fabaceae (2), Amaranthaceae (2), Asteraceae (2), Apiaceae (1), Convolvulaceae (1) and Poaceae (1). Three Rosaceae plant species, plum (*Prunus domestica*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), were its new hosts. Large populations of dark-red spider mite and visible symptoms of injury were observed at 17 sampling locations (mostly on host plants in Fabaceae and Cucurbitaceae families), of which *T. ludeni* was found at 10 locations in mixed populations with other spider mites.

Table 2. Host plants of *Tetranychus ludeni* in Serbia 2019 -2021

Plant family	Host plant species (see Table 1 A-C)	Common name
Amaranthaceae	1. <i>Beta vulgaris</i>	sugar beet
	2. <i>Spinacia oleracea</i>	spinach
Apiaceae	3. <i>Daucus carota</i>	carrot
Asteraceae	4. <i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle
	5. <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	dandelion
Convolvulaceae	6. <i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	bindweed
Cucurbitaceae	7. <i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	watermelon
	8. <i>Cucumis melo</i>	melon
	9. <i>Cucumis sativus</i>	cucumber
	10. <i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	pumpkin
Fabaceae	11. <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	common bean
	12. <i>Pisum sativum</i>	pea
Poaceae	13. <i>Zea mays</i>	maize
Solanaceae	14. <i>Capsicum annuum</i>	pepper
	15. <i>Datura stramonium</i>	thorn apple
	16. <i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	tomato
	17. <i>Solanum melongena</i>	eggplant
	18. <i>Solanum nigrum</i>	black nightshade
	19. <i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	potato
Rosaceae	20. <i>Cydonia oblonga</i>	quince
	21. <i>Malus domestica</i>	apple
	22. <i>Malus sylvestris</i> ▼	crab apple
	23. <i>Prunus avium</i>	sweet cherry
	24. <i>Prunus domestica</i> ▼	plum
	25. <i>Prunus spinosa</i> ▼	blackthorn
	26. <i>Pyrus communis</i>	pear
	27. <i>Rosa canina</i>	dog rose

(▼ new hosts)

Serbian records of *T. ludeni* from sampling locations situated at latitudes between 42°N and 46°N are the northernmost distribution records of this species in the Western Palaearctic. These records are outside the species' typical biogeographic area. Herbivorous arthropod species may occur outside their biogeographic areas due to range expansion triggered by climate change and/or globalization of trade. Expansion of tropical insect and mite species into more temperate regions is a widespread phenomenon, as well as their accidental introduction, accelerated by growing international trade. Besides the impact on biodiversity, spreading or introduced alien herbivorous species may become established as pests in new environments outside their natural range (Walther et al., 2009; Hulme, 2017).

In order to investigate whether *T. ludeni* has the potential to achieve the same status as *T. urticae*, Gotoh et al. (2015) estimated the effect of temperature on development and reproduction of these two species. They found that the intrinsic rate of natural increase (r_m) of *T. ludeni* was higher than that of *T. urticae* at 25, 30 and 35°C, i.e. that the former species is better adapted to hot weather than the latter. Ristyadi et al. (2021) reported that life history traits of *T. ludeni* are highly flexible and adaptive to the dynamic thermal environment over generations. These results indicated that global warming may be the cause of its spreading biogeographic area. The dark-red spider mite does not have a diapause ability. Further research in Serbia should focus on the phenology of *T. ludeni*, and more specifically on its competition with *T. urticae* and *T. turkestanii*, as well as a comparative analysis of the life history traits and population growth of these species.

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Tamnocrveni paučinar, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher (Acari: Tetranychidae) – nova štetna vrsta u akarofauni Srbije

REZIME

Tamnocrveni paučinar, *Tetranychus ludeni* Zacher (Acari: Tetranychidae), je izrazito polifagna vrsta i značajna štetočina privredno važnih biljaka iz familija Cucurbitaceae, Malvaceae, Fabaceae i Solanaceae koja nastanjuje tropske i suptropske oblasti. U zapadnopalearktičkom regionu, izveštaji o rasprostranjenosti ove vrste većinom dolaze iz mediteranskog bazena, odnosno iz Portugalije, Španije, Italije i Izraela. U istraživanju sprovedenom u Srbiji od 2019. do 2021. godine (na ukupno 159 lokacija), *T. ludeni* je nađena na 89 lokacija i 27 biljnih vrsta iz familija Rosaceae (8), Solanaceae (6), Cucurbitaceae (4), Fabaceae (2), Amaranthaceae (2), Asteraceae (2), Apiaceae (1), Convolvulaceae (1) and Poaceae (1). Na oko polovini lokacija uzorkovanja, tamnocrveni paučinar je nađen u mešanim populacijama sa drugim grinjama paučinarima (uglavnom *Tetranychus urticae* i *T. turkestanii*). Tri biljne vrste iz familije Rosaceae: šljiva (*Prunus domestica*), trnjina (*Prunus spinosa*) i divlja jabuka (*Malus sylvestris*), predstavljaju nove domačine. Registrovane lokacije *T. ludeni* na geografskim širinama od 42°N do 46°N najsevernije su tačke na kojima je ova vrsta nađena u zapadnopalearktičkoj zoni.

Keywords: grinje paučinari, *T. ludeni*, štetočine biljaka, rasprostranjenost, Srbija