

REPORT ON THE FIELD MEETING TO WISLEY GARDENS 2008

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INTRODUCTION

On a very wet October day, a small group of people met at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Gardens at Wisley in Surrey (vc 17) to survey the Isopods and Myriapods. The plan had been to hold a committee meeting there in the morning and then spend the afternoon collecting with other members of the group. Unfortunately the combination of the bad weather and other commitments meant that there were just three members present in the afternoon, Eric Philp (ECP), Helen Read (HJR) and Steve Gregory (SJG). We were assisted by Andrew Halstead (AH) of the RHS who allowed us to access some of the glasshouses not normally open to the public and also joined us in some collecting too. Due to the inclement weather we did not spend a great deal of time outside and much of the collecting was undertaken inside glasshouses. A list of locations sampled is given in Table 1. A repeat visit to spend more time in the gardens would, I'm sure, reveal many other interesting species. The glasshouses were very 'clean' and finding specimens was quite difficult, despite this some regular hothouse millipedes were found.

TABLE 1: Details of sampling locations

Locations within Wisley	Habitat Description	OS Grid Reference
1 Glasshouses: Propagation area	Under large pots standing on concrete floor	TQ061583
2 Glasshouses: Arid regions	Under stones & in soil	TQ060583
3 Glasshouses: Humid tropics & temperate	In beds, under fallen leaves & in soil	TQ061583
4 Glasshouses general	As above but location not specified	Probably TQ061583
5 Outside: Near Garden entrance	In shrub planters & flower beds	TQ065582
6 Outside: vegetable garden	Under pots, stones & wood in & around vegetable plots	TQ063582
7 Outside: Far end of gardens	Deciduous woodland near River Wey	TQ062591
8 Outside general	In public gardens, in flower beds and under stones	Probably TQ06 58

ISOPODA

The 8 species of woodlice found (Table 2) are all common and widespread in southern England. Singletons of *Trichoniscus pygmaeus* were under stones, associated with the ubiquitous *T. pusillus* agg. at base hedge (site 6) and in flower bed (site 8). The ant woodlouse *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* was observed in the nest

of the yellow ant *Lasius flavus* under a rock in a flowerbed. *Armadillidium nasatum* was mainly recorded inside glasshouses, whether heated or not, but a few were found outdoors too. This species is frequently recorded inside glasshouses and at the northern edge of its range in Britain is more or less confined to them. Despite much of the time being spent searching inside the various heated glasshouses, it was disappointing that no ‘alien’ woodlice were collected. It would be expected that further collections made in more favourable conditions would turn up additional species (e.g. *Androniscus dentiger* among rubble, *Haplophthalmus danicus* in dead wood and *Porcellionides pruinosus* in compost/manure heaps).

TABLE 2: List of species recorded for each sampling location
All collections were made on 26 October 2008

Species	Location								Recorder
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Isopoda									
<i>Trichoniscus pusillus</i> agg.					X	X			SJG
<i>Trichoniscus pygmaeus</i>						X		X	ECP, SJG
<i>Philoscia muscorum</i>					X	X	X		SJG, AH
<i>Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii</i>					X			X	ECP, SJG
<i>Oniscus asellus</i>					X	X	X		SJG, AH
<i>Armadillidium nasatum</i>	X		X		X				SJG
<i>Armadillidium vulgare</i>					X	X			ECP, SJG
<i>Porcellio scaber</i>					X	X		X	ECP, SJG, AH
Chilopoda									
<i>Stigmatogaster subterranea</i>					X	X	X		SJG, AH
<i>Geophilus flavus</i>							X		AH
<i>Cryptops hortensis</i>					X	X			SJG
<i>Lamyctes emarginatus</i>	X								SJG
<i>Lithobius melanops</i>	X	X							SJG
<i>Lithobius forficatus</i>	X						X		SJG, AH
Diplopoda									
<i>Oxidus gracilis</i>	X	X	X	X					ECP, HJR, SJG
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>					X	X			ECP, SJG
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>							X		AH
<i>Polydesmus coriaceus</i>					X	X			SJG, HJR
<i>Polydesmus inconstans</i>					X			X	ECP, SJG
<i>Choneiulus palmatus</i>	X		X	X					ECP, SJG, HJR
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>							X		AH
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>					X				SJG
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>			X				X		HJR, SJG, AH
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>						X		X	ECP, HJR, SJG
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>	X	X							HJR, SJG
<i>Cylindroiulus parisiorum</i>	X								HJR, SJG
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>							X		AH
<i>Cylindroiulus cf. vulnerarius</i>	X								HJR
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>						X	X		SJG, AH

CHILOPODA

Some six species were recorded (Table 2), mostly those that might be expected. No “hot house exotics” (such as *Tygarrup javanicus*) were collected; in fact no centipedes were found at all in the humid tropics / temperate (Site 3) where such would be most likely to occur. *Geophilus flavus*, *Stigmatogaster subterranea* and *Cryptops hortensis*, all found in outdoor locations (Sites 5 – 7), are widespread in Surrey with the latter species often but by no means exclusively in synanthropic sites (Barber, 1969). *Lithobius forficatus* is

extremely common in many habitats so its occurrence in both the propagation area (Site 1) and outside (Site 8) is not unexpected. *Lithobius melanops* tends to be a species regularly recorded from gardens and inside buildings, and is often seen in greenhouses (it also occurs on the sea shore) and this may indicate a moderate degree of desiccation tolerance.

Lamyctes emarginatus is an interesting species; it is a parthenogenetic type with what appears to be an annual life cycle. Damper situations are said to be characteristic and it has been found in quite large numbers by pitfall-trapping in some river gravels in Wales. The combination of humidity and substrates in propagating areas (Site 1) would seem to fit in with this predilection for damp sites and its small size and breeding habits would make it an ideal candidate for opportunist situations.

DIPLOPODA

The number of species found was 15 and included several regular glasshouse inhabitants such as *Oxidus gracilis* and *Choneiulus palmatus* (Table 2). Three species of *Polydesmus* were found, which is also quite interesting. *P. coriaceus* and *P. inconstans* were found in the gardens, while *P. angustus* was found in deciduous woodland. Two very pale Julids found together in the propagation area of the glass houses turned out to be two different species, one a white *Cylindroiulus parisiorum* and the other a blind *Cylindroiulus* with a downward pointing tail that appeared like *C. vulnerarius*. Unfortunately there was only one female of the latter so it was difficult to confirm the species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to Andrew Halstead of the RHS for allowing us to collect in the gardens and spending so much time with us during the day; also to Marzio Zapparoli who confirmed the identification of *Lamyctes emarginatus* and *Lithobius forficatus* from inside the glasshouses.

REFERENCES

Barber, A.D. (1969) Notes on the Chilopoda of Surrey. *Entomologists' Monthly Magazine* **105**: 85-92.

REPORT ON THE AUTUMN MEETING IN THE OBAN AREA, 2007, DIPLOPODA: ADDITIONAL RECORDS

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A report on millipedes found during the meeting in the Oban area was published in the last Bulletin (**23**: 47-49). The following additional records are based on specimens from the meeting identified by Paul Lee to whom thanks:

Code	Site	Date	Species
8	Ledaig	02.x.2007	<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i> <i>Julus scandinavius</i> <i>Allajulus nitidus</i> <i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>
12	Lismore Island	04.x.2007	<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>
15	Dunstaffinage Castle	05.x.2007	<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>