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On a juvenile of the genus *Euathlus* Ausserer, 1875 found in the United Kingdom in imported blueberries from Chile (Araneae: Theraphosidae)

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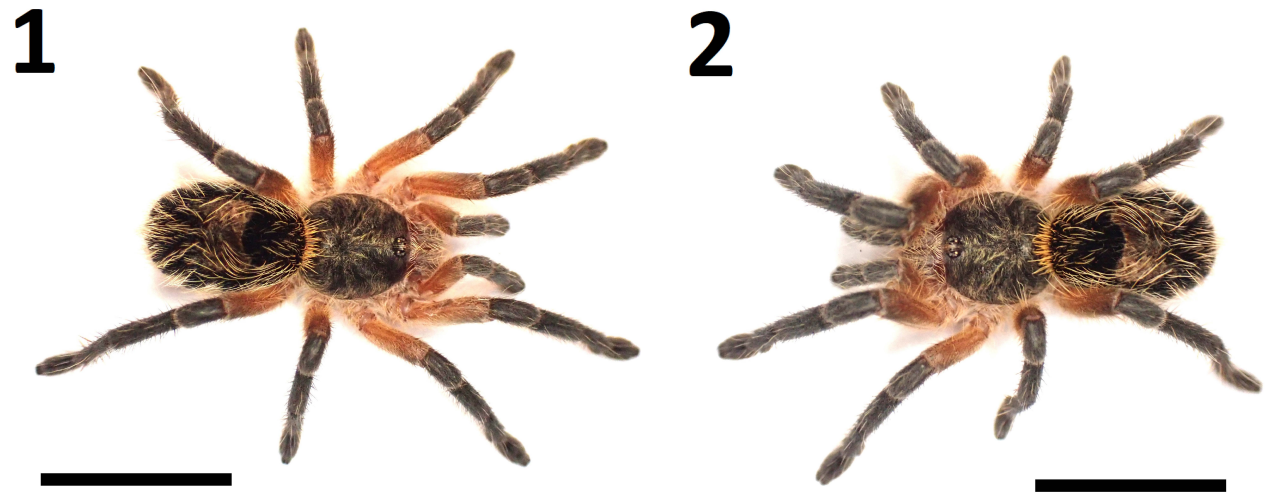
Abstract: A juvenile theraphosid of the genus *Euathlus* Ausserer, 1875 found as a stowaway in blueberries imported from Chile into the United Kingdom is reported and illustrated.
Key words: importation, fruit, stowaway, non-native, tarantula, Chile

Sobre una juvenil del género *Euathlus* Ausserer, 1875 encontrado al Reino Unido en importados arándanos de Chile (Araneae: Theraphosidae)
Resumen: Se informa e ilustra una terafosida juvenil del género *Euathlus* Ausserer, 1875 encontrado como polizón en arándanos importados de Chile al Reino Unido.
Palabras clave: importación, fruta, polizón, non-nativa, tarántula, Chile

The accidental importation of spiders in fruit usually involves araneomorphs (e.g. Schmidt, 1956a, 1956b, 1956c, 1956d, 1957, 1971) but occasionally theraphosid spiders are also stowaways in fruit (Gabriel & Sherwood, 2020; Sherwood, 2021). As of present, no other family of mygalomorphs has been found nor recorded in the literature as a stowaway in fruit in the United Kingdom.

On 02/02/2021 the author DS was contacted by a member of staff at a fruit importation facility in central England in order to identify a spider which was discovered as a stowaway in fruit which had arrived at the facility several days before. The spider was found on the assembly line in blueberries which had been exported from Santiago, Chile to the United Kingdom; and had been scooped up with some of the blueberries and contained in a punnet after discovery. Given that it takes approximately one month for fruit shipments from Chile to arrive in the United Kingdom, the spider was likely in the fruit since December 2020 if not earlier. Initial photographs sent from the staff member's mobile phone to DS clearly showed the spider to be a small juvenile of the genus *Euathlus* Ausserer, 1875, based on the habitus and its small size. Approximately one week after the initial request to DS, she was able to receive the specimen for closer analysis and to photograph its habitus (Figs. 1–2). Several species of *Euathlus* are known to occur around Santiago, and thus it is not possible to identify juveniles based only on the general locality data of "Santiago". Therefore, the specimen shall be kept alive until maturity to enable species-level identification. The specimen has adapted well to captivity and RG observed an exuvia in the enclosure the specimen is kept in on 14/05/2021. The opisthosomal skin of the exuvia was opened and no developed genitalic structures could be observed (likely due to its very small size and the slow ontogenetic development known in many South American theraphosines) and we must therefore reserve judgement on the sex of the specimen for now.

Euathlus currently comprises thirteen species distributed in Chile and Argentina (World Spider Catalog, 2021) namely: *Euathlus affinis* (Nicolet, 1849), *Euathlus antai* Perafán & Pérez-Miles, 2014, *Euathlus atacama* Perafán & Pérez-Miles, 2014, *Euathlus condorito* Perafán & Pérez-Miles, 2014, *Euathlus diamante* Ferretti, 2015, *Euathlus grismadoi* Ríos-Tamayo, 2020, *Euathlus manicata* (Simon, 1892), *Euathlus mauryi* Ríos-Tamayo, 2020, *Euathlus pampa* Ríos-Tamayo, 2020, *Euathlus parvulus* (Pocock, 1903), *Euathlus sagei* Ferretti, 2015, *Euathlus tenebrarum* Ferretti, 2015 and *Euathlus truculentus* L. Koch, 1875. The convoluted history of *Euathlus* taxonomy, especially its confusion with the genera *Brachypelma* Simon, 1891 and *Phrixotrichus* Simon, 1889 resulted in contradictory systematic placements in the last four decades (e.g. Raven, 1985; Schmidt, 1992, 1996; Perafán & Pérez-Miles, 2014). The taxonomy of *Euathlus* is now relatively stabilised (see Perafán & Pérez-Miles, 2014) but one species, *E. affinis* (transferred from *Avicularia* Lamarck, 1818 by Fukushima & Bertani, 2017) needs comprehensive redescription as it is a possible senior synonym of another congeneric taxon. This provides yet more justification for avoiding identification below that of the genus level at present.



Figs. 1–2. Habitus of *Euathlus* sp. juvenile found as a stowaway in blueberries from Chile imported into the United Kingdom. Scale bars = 10mm. Photo credit: Danniella Sherwood

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