

## NEW RECORDS AND OBSERVATIONS OF GLASSHOUSE MILLIPEDES IN ABERDEEN

Mike Davidson

77 Mile-end Avenue, Aberdeen, AB15 5PS.

e-mail: mike.davidson55@btinternet.com

On a visit to the David Welch Winter Gardens at the Duthie Park in Aberdeen (NJ937045) on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009, I noticed the curled up corpses of a flat-backed millipede caught in the cobwebs along the window sills. Three of these were taken for examination and provisionally identified as *Oxidus gracilis* (C.L.Koch, 1847).

A further visit was made on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009, when searches were made below the staging in the potting-up glasshouses, which are not open to the public. These proved to be disappointingly tidy - but there was a sufficient amount of timber, brick, plastic sheeting and pots to yield a number of interesting finds. The following four species are new records for Aberdeenshire.

*Oxidus gracilis* – one adult male and a number of immature specimens below a sheet of plastic

*Cylindroiulus vulnerarius* (Berlese, 1888) – one male in some leaf litter in the main glasshouse

*Choneiulus palmatus* (Nimec, 1895) – numerous males and females

*Nopoiulus kochii* (Gervais, 1847) – a single male

Several *Oxidus gracilis* (including one adult male) were found almost immediately, under a plastic sac on soil. The first UK record of *Oxidus* was in a glasshouse at Morningside, Edinburgh, in 1898 (Evans, 1900) with several, more recent, records at the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh and a 1912-13 record by R.S. Bagnall at the Glasgow Botanic Garden.

A medusa-like aggregation of *Choneiulus palmatus* was found, apparently devouring the remains of a snail. It was assumed that they were consuming an already dead corpse. This species is normally associated with gardens and glasshouses in Scotland (Lee, 2006). *Choneiulus* is the most commonly recorded of these species in Scotland – mostly between the Lothians, Fife and Angus.

A single live male *Cylindroiulus*, tentatively identified as *C. vulnerarius*, was collected from some leaf litter. The millipedes were stored in a container in the fridge for two days but unfortunately the *C. vulnerarius* died and partly disintegrated in that time. Although the head was missing the gonopods and tail end allowed confirmation of its identity. There is the possibility that the *Choneiulus* (already potential suspects in the death of the snail) played a role in its rapid demise. *C. vulnerarius* has previously been found in the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow, Edinburgh and St. Andrews.

One of the “*Choneiulus*”, which had been set aside, proved to be a male *Nopoiulus kochii*. This species has previously been found in Edinburgh, Fife and Berwickshire. It is generally associated with buildings or waste ground (Lee, 2006) and has been found in the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. Examination of the gonopods was slightly more difficult than for *Choneiulus*, but in both cases a combination of dark-field sub-stage and incident illumination made the structures visible without dissection.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Alan Findlay, manager of the Winter Gardens, for permission to search behind the scenes. Information on previous Millipede Recording Scheme records was provided by Paul Lee and details retrieved from the National Biodiversity Network Gateway.

### REFERENCES

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