

**TRACHYSPHAERA LOBATA RIBAUT, A MILLIPEDE NEW TO
BRITAIN FROM
BEMBRIDGE, ISLE OF WIGHT**

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On 27th June, 1984, Mr. R. Jones and myself were in a small coastal woodland at East Cliff, Bembridge (40/648888) where we were sieving soil samples for centipedes. During this exercise we found a number of small whitish millipedes from soil samples taken from a depth of about 23 cm. At first sight these millipedes looked similar to 'ribbed' seeds, about 2mm in diameter, as they were curled in a similar manner to the millipede, *Glomeris marginata*. The 'ribbed' appearance was derived from the existence of transverse rows of tubercles at the posterior margin of each segment (see fig. 1).

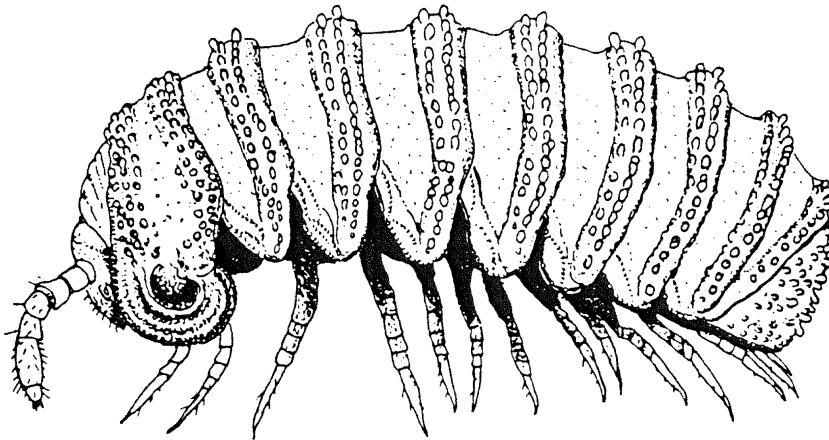


Figure 1. Trachysphaera lobata (Ribaut) from Bembridge, Isle of Wight, 1984 (length 4mm).

Closer examination of the specimens shows that they are largely colourless with a small amount of pigmentation on the head and antennae. There are 11 segments in adults, including the collum, shield and telson. Tergite 2 has additional rows of tubercles at the anterior as well as the posterior margins. Tergite 2 has a characteristic large 'ear-shaped' lateral depression on each side. Tergite 11 (the telson) is rounded and is covered randomly with tubercles apart from the posterior border where they are arranged into rows. There are 17 pairs of legs in the female and to date there have been no males found at the site which indicates that this species is parthenogenetic at this site, which is probably the limit of its distribution. Other records of this species are from central France.

The site is a coastal woodland, dominated by Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplananus*) with a ground flora of nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and blankets of ivy (*Hedera helix*). There are small patches of Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*). The soil consists of sand with shingle which gives way to clay at about 30cm. Soil pH ranges from 5.5 to 6.0. To the east the woodland gives way to the sea and to the west is bordered by a cliff of Bouldnor Formation clay.

During September, 1984, a further record of *T. lobata* was obtained from the Duver on the far side of Bembridge Harbour where it was sieved from leaf litter on sand under scrub.

The records from Bembridge indicate that the species is well established and that it could well be native in the south of Britain. Being so small it is possible that it has been overlooked, but diligent searching could well produce more records. Other species from Britain which could be confused for *T. lobata* are *Stygioglomeris crinita* Brolemann and *Adenomeris gibbosa* Mauries. *S. crinita* however has smooth tergites and so would not give the 'ribbed' appearance. *A. gibbosa* has 12 segments and also lacks ocelli, whereas *T. lobata* has five ocelli in a vertical row down each side of the head. All three species are similar in size (about 4mm maximum).

Bibliography

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Ribaut, J. 1954. Nouvelle espece francaise du genre *Gervaisia*. *Bull. Soc. Hist. nat. Toulouse*. **89** : 239-240.