

SHORT NOTE

**First record of *Graphocephala fennahi* YOUNG, 1977
(Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) in Latvia**

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Rhododendron leafhopper (*Graphocephala fennahi*, YOUNG, 1977) is a native Nearctic species (Wilson et al. 2009). During the first part of 20th century it was accidentally introduced in Europe where it was first found in England in year 1935 (China 1935). Since then it has been also reported from other countries in western and central Europe - Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, and Switzerland (Vidano et al. 1985; Sergel 1987). More recently it has been found also in Czech Republic (Šprynar 2005), Sweden (Söderman et al. 2009), and Poland (Musik 2011). It was not known to occur in Baltic countries (Söderman et al. 2009).

Numerous adults of *Graphocephala fennahi* (Fig. 1) were found in Botanical garden of Latvian University in Rīga on 17.09.2015. Locality coordinates: 56°56'56"N, 24°03'21"E. Adults were found on *Rhododendron* sp. leaves. Judging from large number of adult specimens (>100 individuals) this population most probably has been established here already for several seasons.

G. fennahi host plants in species native range predominantly include *Rhododendron* sp. In Europe nymphs have been recorded also from other plants. It is univoltine in Europe and nymphs occur from May to July and adults from July to

November. Eggs are laid in flower bud and they overwinter. Both nymphs and adults feed on sap from underside of the leaves, but no apparent damage to the leaves can be seen even when species is present in large numbers (Sergel 1987). *G. fennahi* sometimes is referred as a pest species due to its connection with phytopathogenic fungus *Seifertia azaleae* (PECK) PARTR. & MORGAN-JONES, 2002 (Šprynar 2005). Recent studies have shown that fungal infestation of *S. azaleae* depends on many other factors and role of *G. fennahi* might be overstated (Hommers et al. 2003).

It is possible that this species is also present in other gardens and parks in Rīga and other sites where *Rhododendron* spp. bushes have been planted, but further research is required to find extent of its distribution.

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Figure 1. Observed individual of *Graphocephala fennahi* YOUNG, 1977. Specimen from Rīga, Central Latvia (photo: U.Piterāns).