

Newsletter: May 2009

***Phytomyza astrantiae* (Hendel, 1924) – An agromyzid leafminer new to the UK - a provisional identification**



On 16th May 2009 David Manning noticed mines on the leaves of *Astrantia major* in his garden in Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire.

Looking at the leafmine website, only one miner was recorded on this plant – the dipterous miner *Phytomyza spondylii*. The mines did not quite match the description for this miner and so David sent photos to Rob Edmunds who said it looked like *Phytomyza astrantiae*. Willem Ellis confirmed this identification.

The mines of this species key out in Hering, forming blotch mines on the leaf, whereas the mines of *P.spondylii* are much narrower and longer.



As far as we are aware this constitutes the first record of this miner in the UK.



David has had the *Astrantia* in his garden for twenty years. He has visited a local garden centre as a possible source of the mines on imported plants, but found that *Astrantia* is not stocked there.

Most records of *P. astrantiae* come from Germany and adjacent countries, where the hostplant is indigenous. Recently it has been recorded in Turkey. Since 2001 the species is known in the Netherlands, where, like in the UK, the hostplant occurs only as an ornamental plant.

A search of this miner in gardens could prove very fruitful as we suspect it is an overlooked leaf miner.

David is attempting to rear through this bivoltine species.

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