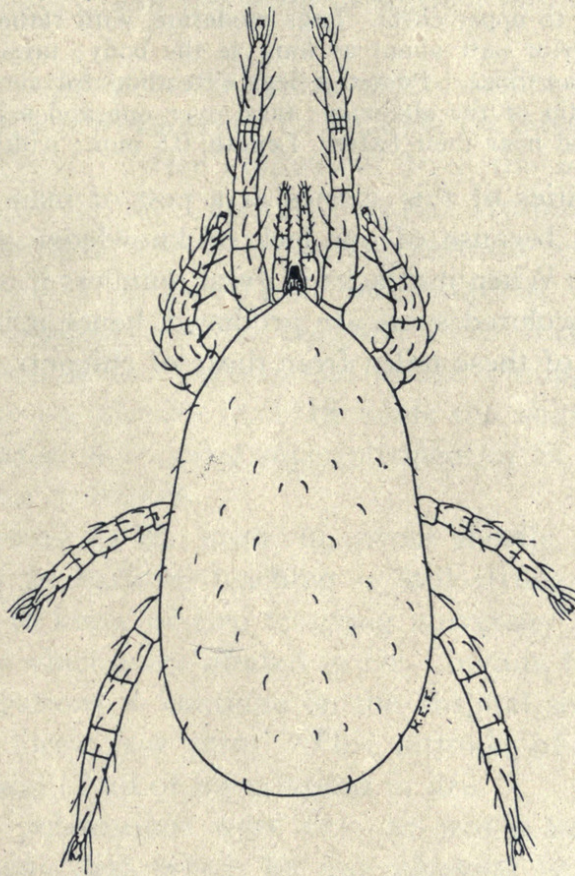


A GAMASID MITE ANNOYING TO MAN

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On two occasions during the summer of 1919 the writer has encountered a small gamasid mite that gets on the skin of the legs, and for that matter on any part of the body, and causes a considerable annoyance and a "creepy" sensation by running about over the skin. In addition to the annoyance thus occasioned, the mites have a faculty of stopping in the folds of the skin and inserting their mandibles, thus



Hyletastes missouriensis Ewing. Dorsal view, $\times 110$.

causing actual pain. At present it has not been determined whether they engorge blood from man or not. On both occasions these mites were reported as chiggers by other people frequenting the same localities. One of these was along an electric line about five miles west of Washington, D. C., in Virginia, and the other was a front lawn of a friend about two miles from this place. The mite in question was described by the writer in 1909, from material sent to him by Professor

C. R. Crosby, from Columbia, Missouri. It was named *Hyletastes missouriensis*. The material in which the original specimens were contained consisted chiefly of bits of decaying leaves and had been obtained by using a Berlese trap. The mite has also been taken from under bark at Muncie, Illinois. A description of the species is here given:

A small, elongate mite of a uniform, light yellowish, brown color. Sexes alike as far as secondary characters are concerned. Body about twice as long as broad, sides subparallel behind the shoulders, and slightly concave in front of them. The abdomen is broadly and evenly rounded behind. Body all but naked above, yet observed to be very sparsely clothed with small simple setae, a pair of which is situated at the front apex. Ventral abdominal plate circular, slightly over one-half the width of abdomen in diameter; anal plate triangular, one-half as broad as ventral plate. Palpi about half as long as anterior legs and well clothed with setae. Mandibles stout; upper jaw or chela, a stout, projecting, strongly-curved, claw-like hook which surpasses the lower jaw, a short, sharp, curved sword-like, piercing structure; teeth not pronounced, and apparently confined to upper chela. Legs moderate, with rather small claws and ambulacrum. Anterior pair about as long as the body; tarsi about one and a half times as long as tibiae. Posterior legs extending for about one-third their length beyond the tip of the abdomen; tarsi over one and a half times as long as tibiae and divided near their bases. Length, 0.5 mm.; width 0.3 mm.

The potentialities of this species as a pest of man can not be predicted at present because of our lack of knowledge as to its biology and distribution. When it attacks in great numbers it is very irritating. No wheals or discolored spots are produced, hence it is easy to differentiate an attack of these mites from those of chiggers.



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