

**On the status of “*Prociphilus californicus*”  
(Hemiptera: Aphididae)**

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*Abstract.* The name “*Prociphilus californicus*” has been used for aphids that distort leaves of ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) in the western states. This name is not valid. It is not completely clear which species of *Prociphilus* the name refers to, but we think it is most likely to be *Prociphilus americanus* (Walker). The relevant literature is reviewed.

*Key Words.* Insecta, *Prociphilus americanus*, *Prociphilus (Meliarhizophagus) fraxinifolii* (Riley), Hemiptera, Aphididae, Pemphiginae, *Fraxinus*.

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An aphid that curls the leaves of Oregon ash (*Fraxinus oregona* Nutt. (Oleaceae)) has been called *Prociphilus californicus* in several popular West-coast extension publications (Dreistadt et al. 1994; Koehler 1987; Perry 2002), probably following Johnson and Lyon (1976). *Prociphilus californicus* is not a valid name. The source of the confusion is an article by Davidson (1914) in which he describes the life cycle of *Pemphigus californicus* Davidson: “Close observations on the habits of this species indicate that it migrates towards the end of April from the buttercup to the ash (*Fraxinus oregona* Nutt.). The third generation on the buttercup all become winged lice and forsake the plant in a body. They and their immediate progeny cause the leaves of the ash to curl in a manner similar to that caused by *Pemphigus fraxini-dipetalae* Essig. In May, the shrivelled [sic] migrants may be found in the curled leaves together with the apterous lice of the second and third generations on the ash. These apterous lice have undeveloped eyes, the first generation of them being large bloated individuals. The third, or second apterous, generation on the ash is composed of both winged and wingless individuals.” Essig (1926) stated that “*P[rociphilus] californicus* (Davidson) (Fig. 153) is a California species wintering on Oregon ash and migrating to the buttercup as a summer host.” The second edition (Essig 1958) made no changes to the text or the figure. A search of Agricola and CABI databases turned up no recent references to “*Prociphilus californicus*.”

It is clear that Davidson (1914) was describing a species that overwinters on *Fraxinus* rather than a migrant from *Ranunculus* because he described the fundatrix (“first generation . . . large bloated individuals”). None of the pemphigine aphids with holocycles on *Fraxinus* colonize *Ranunculus*. It is most likely he was confusing *Pemphigus californicus* Davidson, a junior synonym of *Thecabius populiconduplifolius* (Cowen ex Gillette & Baker 1895), with a species of *Prociphilus* that has a holocycle on *Fraxinus*.

