

**THE WOODWASP, *SIREX NOCTILIO* (HYMENOPTERA: SIRICIDAE):
ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL CONTROL IN ARGENTINA**

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The woodwasp *Sirex noctilio* has become the most damaging forest pest for the pine plantations in Argentina in the last decade. In 1985 *Sirex* had been detected in the northeastern provinces and since then the *Sirex* populations have spread into most of the commercial pine plantations of the country, causing great losses and tree mortality.

Following its accidental introduction in Western Andean Patagonia, in a mixed conifer forest located close to the city of San Carlos de Bariloche (72W 41S), it has become established, together with its parasitoid *Ibalia leucospoides*. A management programme has been developed including monitoring, establishment of trap trees for early detection of the pest and biological control methods with *Ibalia leucospoides* and the parasitic nematode *Beddingia siricidicola*.

An overview of the damage, susceptible species and ecology of *Sirex* and its biocontrol agents is described, with special emphasis on silvicultural and biological control measures.

Recent research projects focus on some aspects of *Sirex* and the nematode which can improve the control strategy in the future. In this regard some questions related to the nematode, such as strains and infectivity, need to be discussed.



Paula Klasmer (Vicky) works in Forest Research at the Campo Forestal General San Martín, Estación Experimental Bariloche, Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA), El Bolsón, Río Negro, Argentina. She is in charge of the Entomology Lab. She is a biologist entomologist specialising in the ecology and biological control of Forest Insects. Vicky has gained considerable experience on *Sirex noctilio* since it was introduced in Patagonia (South of Argentina) by the end of 1992. She had also completed training courses in Embrapa-Brasil on *S. noctilio* and its biological control. In addition, Vicky has done research on other pests like the pine shoot moth, *Rhyacionia buoliana* and recently on insects damaging berries.

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