

KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

***AGELENA LABYRINTHICA* (CLERCK, 1757) IN AN ELEVATED WEB RETREAT ON *PRUNUS* SP. (ARANEAE: AGELENIDAE)**

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ABSTRACT

A web of an adult female of *Agelena labyrinthica* (Clerck, 1757) is reported at a height of approximately 130cm on a *Prunus* sp. in Ashdown Forest, East Sussex. The spider appears to have predated numerous dermapterans in the area, evident from numerous carcasses in the web.

KEY WORDS: Web, tree, height, Ashdown Forest, East Sussex

INTRODUCTION

Agelena labyrinthica (Clerck, 1757) is a distinctive and widespread (Roberts, 1985; World Spider Catalog, 2020) grassland species with a strongly southern distribution in the United Kingdom (Bee, Oxford & Smith, 2017). *A. labyrinthica* is recorded across most of Ashdown Forest (Spider Recording Scheme, 2020) and typically inhabits webs <50cm from the ground (pers. obs.) in grass tufts and other vegetation. Indeed, the first author – who has seen many hundreds of these spiders across the South of England – had never seen them in retreats higher than this.

OBSERVATION

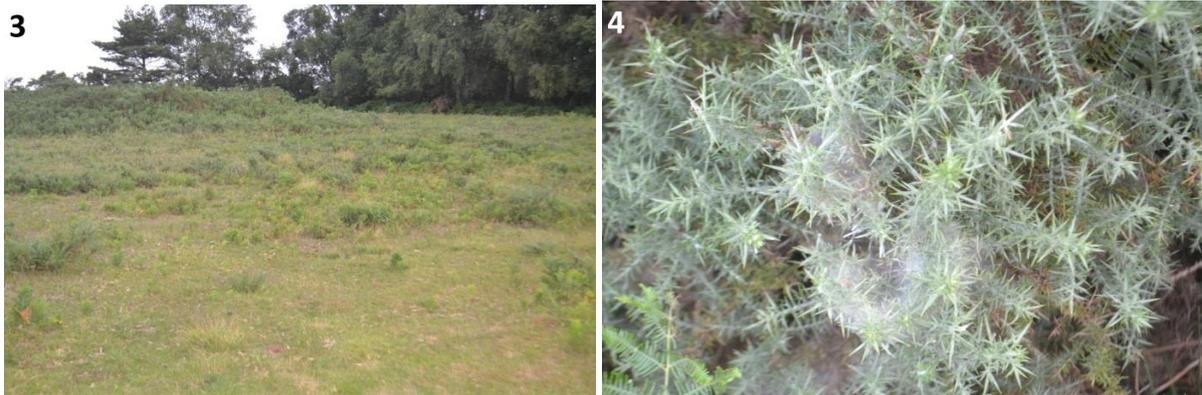
On 21/07/2020 the authors were walking through Ashdown Forest when a distinctive web was noticed on a large *Prunus* sp. (Figs. 1–2) approximately 130cm from the ground. On closer inspection, the carcasses of numerous dermapterans (see Fig. 2) in addition to one live individual were noted, clearly a frequent prey source of the spider. After a few minutes of tickling the web with a blade of grass the spider emerged, proving to be a sizeable female of *A. labyrinthica*, and retreated shortly afterwards.

DISCUSSION

Records of *A. labyrinthica* in trees are known, as wandering specimens (e.g. Machač & Tuf, 2016), but we are unaware of previously published data indicating its specific presence on *Prunus* Linnaeus, 1753 nor illustrating its webs at such height. Thus, this short contribution serves to formally report its presence on such trees and



Figs. 1–2: Web retreat of adult female *Agelena labyrinthica* (Clerck, 1757) at height of approximately 130cm on *Prunus* sp. in Ashdown Forest, East Sussex, **1** general view with second author pointing to centre of tube web, **2** close up view of central area of web, showing numerous dermapteran carcasses.



Figs. 3–4: Habitat supporting *Agelena labyrinthica* (Clerck, 1757) in Ashdown Forest, East Sussex, **3** typical habitat for a variety of life stages, principally adults, **4** close up of web retreat of juvenile specimen in bracken.

demonstrate its webbed structure at a height >100cm. Numerous adult and immature specimens of *A. labyrinthica* were seen at the same locality on the same day, in more typical retreats nearer to ground level (Figs. 3–4). Both the web structures and general habitus of this species are unmistakable and allow easy visual identification in the field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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