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# *Platynota stultana* Walsingham, 1884 a new record for Malta (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae, Tortricinae, Sparganothini)

Aldo Catania, Anthony Seguna, John J. Borg & Paul Sammut

**Abstract**

*Platynota stultana* Walsingham, 1884 is reported for the first time from the Maltese Islands. A Maltese name is proposed for this new record.
**Keywords:** Lepidoptera, Tortricidae, *Platynota stultana*, Maltese Islands.

*Platynota stultana* **Walsingham, 1884 nuevo para Malta (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae, Tortricinae, Sparganothini)**

**Resumen**

*Platynota stultana* Walsingham,1884 se menciona por primera vez para Malta. Se propone un nombre maltés para este nuevo registro.
**Palabras clave:** Lepidoptera, Tortricidae, *Platynota stultana*, Malta.

## Introduction

*Platynota stultana* Walsingham 1884, is a member of the family Tortricidae. It is native to the northwestern part of Mexico and the adjacent southwestern part of the USA (Powell, 1983). Since the mid-1980s, it has also established itself in Hawaii (Miller & Hodges, 1995).

*Platynota stultana* was initially recorded in Europe in 2009, specifically in Spain's Murcia and Almeria provinces, through routine agricultural area monitoring conducted by pest control services. It was predominantly found infesting *Capsicum* sp. (Solanaceae) during this surveillance period (Groenen & Baixeras, 2013).

Although there was no published literature in entomological journals, Spanish popular electronic agricultural journals and leaflets have included information on this pest and provided details on its distribution and its potential control in Spain (Hymenoptera, 2011). Records in Spain state that it was actually discovered between 2005 and 2008 in parallel fieldworks in the provinces of Almeria, Alicante, and Granada (Groenen & Baixeras, 2013).

In the UK, a single larva of *Platynota stultana* was found at a plant nursery during 2004 (Korycinska & Eyre, 2013; Agassiz & Feltwell, 2020, both cited in Trematerra & Colacci, 2022). In June 2018, a pupa of *Platynota stultana* was discovered in Germany on *Capsicum* sp., imported from Spain (Lepiforum, 2024). In Italy especially in Apulia, Saline near Zapponeta, observations were made during 2020 to 2022 and recorded by Trematerra & Colacci (2022). The status of *Platynota stultana* in

other European countries indeed remains uncertain, highlighting the need for additional research and monitoring efforts to understand its distribution and its potential impact across the continent.

This species is highly polyphagous and was reported to feed on over 100 plant species belonging to 30 different families. As *Platynota stultana* feeds in agricultural and horticultural settings, invading garden and ornamental plants, fruit trees and vegetables, it is recognised as an important pest of both greenhouses and fields (Trematerra & Colacci, 2022).

## Material examined

MALTA, 1 ♀, Żebbuġ, 13-II-2024, 35º52'5.86"N,14º26'20.35"E [at light], A. Catania leg; (in coll. A. Catania).


**Figure 1. a)** Underside. **b)** Upperside of *Platynota stultana* Walsingham,1884 - MALTA, Żebbuġ, 1 ♀, 13-II-2024.

## Discussion

From the Maltese Islands no less than 74 species of Tortricidae have been recorded (Sammut, 2020), with the latest addition being *Clavigesta gerti* Larsen, 2010 (Seguna et al. 2022).

The occurrence of *Platynota stultana* in Malta is not a surprise as many ornamental flowers and agricultural crops are imported regularly from both neighbouring countries across Europe and beyond. This small moth, which can measure between 12-25 mm, is very easily overlooked while inspecting vegetative matter, especially because its larvae form small silken tubes between leaves and folds of plants. *Platynota stultana* prefers to feed on certain agricultural crops, particularly grapes and greenhouse fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, and this highlights its potential impact on agricultural production. This species poses a significant threat as it targets ripening bunches of grapes, where larvae can break the skin of the berries, facilitating the initiation of rot by yeast and fungi. Furthermore, *Platynota stultana* demonstrates also a preference for crops belonging to the Solanaceae family, including species like capsicum and aubergines. This feeding behaviour could lead to substantial losses in yield and quality for farmers cultivating these crops (Trematerra & Colacci, 2022).

The species is new to the Maltese Lepidopterofauna, and we propose the Maltese name Platinota**.**

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*Aldo Catania
27, Rama-Rama, Triq Mons, Anton Cilia
MT-Żebbuġ, ŻBĠ3140
MALTA / *MALTA*
E-mail: aldocatania47@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7559-143X

Anthony Seguna
68, 'Redeemer', Triq l-Emigrant
MT-Naxxar, NXR3200
MALTA / *MALTA*
E-mail: seguna@onvol.net
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6264-0690

John J. Borg
National Museum of Natural History
Vilhena Palace, Pjazza San Publju
MT-Imdina, MDN1011
MALTA / *MALTA*
E-mail: john.j.borg@gov.mt

Paul Sammut
137/2, Dingli Road
MT-Rabat, RBT9023
MALTA / *MALTA*
E-mail: farfett@onvol.net
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2019-9577

*Autor para la correspondencia / *Corresponding author*

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