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7 **Herbivores on native and exotic *Senecio* plants: is host switching related to plant novelty and
8 insect diet breadth under field conditions?**

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25 Running title: Herbivore host switching on exotic *Senecio*

26

27 **Abstract**

28 1. Native herbivores can establish novel interactions with alien plants after invasion.
29 However, it is unclear whether these new associations are quantitatively significant compared to the
30 assemblages with native flora under natural conditions.

31 2. Herbivores associated with two exotic plants, namely *Senecio inaequidens* and *S.*
32 *pterophorus*, and two coexisting natives, namely *S. vulgaris* and *S. lividus*, were surveyed in a
33 replicated long-term field study to ascertain whether the plant-herbivore assemblages in mixed
34 communities are related to plant novelty and insect diet breadth.

35 3. Native herbivores used exotic *Senecio* as their host plants. Of the 19 species of
36 Lepidoptera, Diptera, and Hemiptera found in this survey, 16 were associated with the exotic *Senecio*
37 plants. Most of these species were polyphagous, yet we found a higher number of individuals with a
38 narrow diet breadth, which is contrary to the assumption that host switching mainly occurs in
39 generalist herbivores.

40 4. The *Senecio* specialist *Sphenella marginata* (Diptera: Tephritidae) was the most abundant
41 and widely distributed insect species (*ca.* 80% of the identified specimens). *Sphenella* was associated
42 with *S. lividus*, *S. vulgaris*, and *S. inaequidens* and was not found on *S. pterophorus*. The presence of
43 native plant congeners in the invaded community did not ensure an instantaneous ecological fitting
44 between insects and alien plants.

45 5. We conclude that novel associations between native herbivores and introduced *Senecio*
46 plants are common under natural conditions. However, plant novelty is not the only predictor of
47 herbivore abundance due to the complexity of natural conditions.

48

49 **Keywords**

50 *Senecio*, plant-herbivore interactions, exotic plants, host switching, diet breadth, insect performance,
51 Enemy Release hypothesis, Biotic Resistance hypothesis

52 **Introduction**

53 The introduction of an exotic plant into a new habitat may strongly affect the functioning of the
54 invaded ecosystem (Vitousek et al., 1996). Novel plant species can outcompete native vegetation to
55 cause decreases in plant abundance and diversity and thus affect the local arthropod assemblage at
56 higher trophic levels (Levine et al., 2004). Thus, mixed communities formed by introduced aliens
57 and native vegetation have been associated with lower insect abundance, biomass, species
58 composition, diversity, and richness compared with non-invaded communities (Herrera & Dudley,
59 2003; Gerber et al., 2008). Herbivores, particularly those adapted to consume one or a few plant
60 species, might be particularly susceptible to the replacement of native vegetation by novel plant
61 species (Tallamy, 2004).

62 Despite the negative effects that invasions may have on native insects, alien plants also offer
63 potential food resources that can be exploited by local herbivores. Immediately after invasion, exotic
64 plants are expected to be released from coevolved enemies from the area of origin (Keane &
65 Crawley, 2002). However, new assemblages between native herbivores from the invaded area and
66 exotic plants are often established (Jaenike, 1990; Frenzel & Brandl, 2003; Graves & Shapiro, 2003;
67 Tallamy et al., 2010; García-Robledo & Horvitz, 2011) through a process known as Native Enemy
68 Host Switching (Keane & Crawley, 2002). Host switching may be advantageous for the local
69 herbivore populations because insects, in addition to feeding on their original hosts, incorporate the
70 novel plant as a complementary food source (Agosta, 2006). In California, where 34% of the
71 butterfly species have been reported to oviposit or feed on exotic plants, the use of an alternative
72 alien host allows some insect species to expand their geographic range and extend their breeding
73 season (Graves & Shapiro, 2003).

74 To establish persistent interactions with novel species, insects need to recognize and select
75 alien plants that coexist in the same habitats, and immatures have to display resistance mechanisms
76 against novel plant chemical defenses to successfully develop on the new host (Després et al., 2007).

77 Polyphagous herbivores that have adapted to feed on multiple species and families exhibit more
78 plastic mechanisms of host recognition, selection, and resistance compared with herbivores with a
79 narrow diet range (Jaenike, 1990). Accordingly, it is generally accepted that, during the initial stages
80 of invasion, host switching will be more frequent for generalist compared with specialist herbivores
81 (Keaney & Crawley, 2002; Parker & Hay, 2005; Doorduyn & Vrieling, 2011). The presence of native
82 hosts that are phylogenetically related to the invading exotic plants, which thus exhibit similar
83 phytochemistry, may also facilitate host switching for specialist insects (Janzen, 1968; Strong et al.,
84 1984).

85 At least two hypotheses have been proposed for the prediction of the intensity of host
86 switching by native generalist and specialist insects under field conditions when both native and
87 exotic host plants are available. The Enemy Release hypothesis (Keane & Crawley, 2002) suggests
88 that local insects will have a higher preference and exhibit better performance when they are
89 associated with native hosts. Thus, in a mixed community formed by native and alien plants, local
90 insects would preferably attack the native over the alien plants. In contrast, the Biotic Resistance
91 Hypothesis (Levine et al., 2004; Parker & Hay, 2005) predicts that the newly introduced plants
92 exhibit a lack of defensive mechanisms against a phytophagous attack; thus, alien plants may be
93 more susceptible to herbivory damage compared with native plants. There is a large body of
94 evidence supporting both hypotheses from experiments performed under controlled conditions, such
95 as laboratory bioassays and common garden designs (Agrawal & Kotanen, 2003; Parker & Gilbert,
96 2007; Chun et al., 2010; Tallamy et al., 2010). However, field data on herbivore preference and
97 performance in invaded communities are scarce (Hill & Kotanen, 2010), and it is unclear whether
98 these new plant-herbivore associations that are established under natural conditions are quantitatively
99 significant compared to the assemblages with native flora.

100 In this study, we investigated the plant-herbivore associations between native and exotic plant
101 congeners under field conditions. We used *Senecio* (Asteraceae) as a model system because it is one

102 of the largest genera of flowering plants and is represented by more than 200 indigenous species
103 (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 2012) and 10 alien species (DAISIE European Invasive Alien
104 Species Gateway, 2008) in Europe. The genus *Senecio* is characterized by the presence of
105 pyrrolizidine alkaloids that are highly toxic to vertebrate and invertebrate herbivores and affect host
106 selection and performance (Hartmann 1999). *S. inaequidens* DC., which is native to South Africa, is
107 a successful plant invader in Europe (EPPO Panel on Invasive Alien Species, 2012). Accidentally
108 introduced in central Europe in 1896 through wool imports (Ernst, 1998), *S. inaequidens* has spread
109 to most European countries and to other parts of the world, including South and North America,
110 Australia, and Africa, where it has colonized vineyards, pastures, and natural areas. Another South
111 African alien, *S. pterophorus* DC., was first reported in continental Europe in 1982 in a wool
112 industrial area near Barcelona, NE Iberian Peninsula (Casasayas, 1989). *S. pterophorus* is highly
113 invasive in SE Australia, where it is considered a noxious weed subject to control, but its distribution
114 in Europe is locally restricted to two areas in the Mediterranean basin: Catalonia (NE Iberian
115 Peninsula) (Chamorro et al., 2006) and Liguria (NW Italian Peninsula) (Barberis et al., 1998;
116 Castells et al., 2013).

117 To characterize host switching among plant congeners under natural conditions, we
118 conducted a replicated field survey of the phytophagous insect community associated with two
119 exotic plants, namely *Senecio inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus*, and two coexisting native plants,
120 namely *S. vulgaris* L. and *S. lividus* L. We determined the abundance and identity of any insects
121 feeding on vegetative and reproductive plant tissues during the complete plant reproductive period to
122 answer the following questions: 1) Does the herbivore abundance depend on the plant origin (native
123 vs. exotic)?; 2) Is host switching related to insect diet breadth?; and 3) Does the consumption of
124 exotic plants affect insect performance?

125

126 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

127 *Study sites*

128 The present study was conducted at Montseny Natural Park (2°16'E 41°42' N), which is 60 km NE
129 of Barcelona (NE Iberian Peninsula). The rainfall ranges from 860 to 1050 mm, and the mean
130 temperature is 11.2°C. Our main objective was to evaluate the assemblages occurring under field
131 conditions between phytophagous insects and host plants with two contrasting coevolutionary
132 histories (indigenous and exotic plants that are novel to the local fauna) that are also phylogenetically
133 close. Based on the flora distributional data obtained from the Biodiversity Data Bank of Catalonia
134 (Font, 2012) and the literature (Pino et al., 2000; Chamorro et al., 2006; Caño et al., 2007), we
135 selected four species from the genus *Senecio* that are widely distributed within the Park: the exotic
136 species *S. inaequidens* DC. and *S. pterophorus* DC., which have been present in the Park since the
137 1990s, and the native species *S. vulgaris* L. and *S. lividus* L. A preliminary field screening in various
138 types of habitats, slopes, and altitudes was conducted to locate areas within the Park where the four
139 species coexist. We selected six 600-m-diameter circular areas that are located at an altitude between
140 500 and 900 m on the south slope of the park and separated by at least 2 km (Fig. 1). By surveying a
141 relatively small area, we aimed to ensure that the four species were exposed to the same arthropod
142 communities and microclimate conditions. Thus, differences in the insect abundance across the plant
143 species were expected to be mostly related to the insect preference and performance and not to
144 differences in the flora and fauna spatial distributions. The common habitats within the sampling
145 sites were open *Quercus ilex* forests, *Q. suber* plantations, forest margins, and abandoned crop fields.
146 Other native *Senecio* species reported in the park (*S. adonidifolius* and *S. viscosus*) were absent in the
147 selected locations. In April and May 2009, four to 32 individual plants from each *Senecio* species
148 and location (a total of 479 individuals) were tagged using a plastic label attached to the plant stem.
149 A GPS was used to ensure that the selected individuals were located within the targeted area. The
150 plants were labeled during their initial reproductive stage, when the flower heads were still
151 developing, and monitored during the entire reproductive period. The locality that showed the

152 highest insect abundance in 2009 was Vallfornés, and we surveyed the herbivory in this location
153 during one additional year (2010) using a similar protocol, through which a total of 116 additional
154 individuals were tagged.

155

156 *Insect survey*

157 The insect survey was part of a larger study to determine the effects of herbivores and pathogens on
158 plant fitness and alien plant invasive capacity. Every 10 to 15 days from April to December 2009 at
159 all six localities (22 to 26 visits in each locality) and from May to November 2010 at Vallfornés (14
160 visits), the labeled plants were studied to determine if any insects were feeding on the vegetative and
161 reproductive parts. On each sampling date, the plants were first inspected for aphids, and the
162 presence or absence was recorded individually for each labeled plant. The shoots were then
163 inspected, and the herbivores were counted, collected, and transported to the laboratory for
164 identification. The predators collected during plant inspection, such as the Syrphidae (Diptera)
165 *Eupeodes corollae* (Fabricius, 1794), *Scaeva dignota* (Rondani, 1857), and *Scaeva pyrastris*
166 (Linnaeus, 1758), were not included in the study. To assess the presence of phytophagous insects
167 growing within the flower heads, all non-dispersed fructified capitula (a total of 31,370 for 2009 and
168 2010) were dissected *in situ* or transported to the laboratory.

169 The flower heads were longitudinally dissected to determine the presence of insects growing
170 inside. The heads that contained larvae were carefully closed and placed into a vial at room
171 temperature to raise the adults. The Lepidoptera larvae collected on plant shoots were reared in
172 plastic containers at room temperature by supplying leaf material from the host plant in which they
173 were found. Food was added as necessary until the insects pupated. The pupae found inside the
174 flower heads were maintained in glass vials at room temperature until the adults emerged. With the
175 exception of *Orthosia cerasi* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae), which was identified at the larval stage due
176 to its unique morphology, the emerged adult moths were sent to specialist entomologists for

177 identification. The mortality of early instar larvae reared in the laboratory was relatively high, and
178 some individuals were thus not identified at the species level. In these cases, the insects were sorted
179 by order and family. The empty pupal cases found inside the flower heads were also classified by
180 order and family based on morphological similarities with pupal cases reared in the laboratory until
181 the emergence of the adults. The aphids for taxonomic identification were collected only once in
182 May 2010, and care was taken to include individuals of different colors, sizes, and morphologies.
183 The labeled *S. pterophorus* plants at Vallfornés had no associated aphids in 2010, although
184 significant amounts were recorded in 2009. Thus, in May 2011, we collected aphid subsamples from
185 three *S. pterophorus* individuals at Can Tarrer (CT) for identification purposes. Some Lepidoptera
186 larvae were parasitized, and the emerged parasitoid adults were sent for identification. Due to the
187 lack of taxonomical information, the identity of most parasitoid species remained unresolved. The
188 insect taxonomy was performed by internationally recognized specialists (see acknowledgements for
189 details).

190 To estimate the effects of host plants on insect performance, the adult body mass of the two
191 most abundant species was determined: the fruit fly *Sphenella marginata* and its parasitoid
192 *Pteromalus* sp. Fruit fly specimens collected in the field as pupae that produced morphologically
193 intact adults (N = 388 for *Sphenella marginata* and N = 100 for *Pteromalus* sp.) were oven-dried for
194 24 h at 65°C and weighted on a precision scale (MX5 Microbalance, Mettler Toledo).

195

196 *Herbivore host breadth*

197 Data on the associations between herbivore species and host plants were obtained from the
198 relevant scientific literature. Different sources were used for each arthropod family: Noctuidae
199 (Robinson et al., 2010), Geometridae (Mironov, 2003), Pyralidae (Roesler, 1973), Agromyzidae
200 (Spencer, 1989; 1990), Tephritidae (White, 1988), and Aphididae (García Prieto & Nieto Nafría,

201 2005; Blackman & Eastop, 2006). The number of host genera and families for each phytophagous
202 species were counted.

203

204 *Data analyses*

205 The abundance of herbivores (Lepidoptera and Diptera) and parasitoids was estimated as the
206 total number of insects found on each individual plant corrected by the sampling effort, *i.e.*, the
207 number of visits per plant. The abundance of Hemiptera Aphididae was estimated as the percentage
208 of visits during which an individual plant was associated with aphids, which was recorded as
209 presence or absence. The herbivore abundances were calculated throughout the entire plant
210 reproductive season and the overlapping reproductive period for all surveyed *Senecio* species (May
211 and June) during 2009 and 2010. The differences across plant species and locations (in 2009) were
212 analyzed through ANOVA. The count data obtained in this study is not expected to follow a normal
213 distribution even after transformation. However, ANOVAs can be performed if the variances are
214 homogeneous without outliers and the sample size is large, even if the data are not normally
215 distributed (Anabel Blasco, Statistical Services, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona). Thus, to
216 conduct the statistical analyses, the data were first transformed to stabilize the variances. The
217 dependent variables expressed as mean values were square-root transformed, and the percentages
218 were Anscombe-transformed [$2 * \text{square root}(x + 3/8)$]. Two-way ANOVA with the species as the
219 fixed factor and the location as the random factor was performed to analyze the herbivore and
220 parasitoid abundance in 2009. One-way ANOVA was performed to test the differences in the
221 herbivore (Lepidoptera, Diptera, and Hemiptera) and parasitoid (Diptera Tachinidae and
222 Hymenoptera) abundance across species in 2010. The differences in the body mass for the Diptera
223 *Sphenella marginata* and its parasitoid *Pteromalus* sp. associated with *Senecio* species was tested
224 independently through one-way ANOVA. Tukey's post-hoc tests were conducted on all of the
225 analyses to test the differences among *Senecio* species with $P < 0.05$, including only the plant species

226 which exhibited an insect abundance different from 0. The statistical analyses were performed using
227 the SPSS 19 software (IBM).

228

229 **Results**

230 A total of 2,865 phytophagous specimens of Lepidoptera and Diptera were collected throughout the
231 field surveys in 2009 and 2010 on the two native (*Senecio vulgaris* and *S. lividus*) and two exotic (*S.*
232 *inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus*) host plants. Additionally, a total of 3,732 aphid colonies were
233 recorded on 278 different individual plants.

234 The Lepidoptera abundance was generally higher on the exotic plant species compared with
235 the native plant species in 2009 and 2010 if the entire sampling period was considered, with the
236 exception of *S. pterophorus* and *S. lividus*, for which no statistically differences were found between
237 species in 2009 (Fig. 2). However, when the comparison was restricted to May and June, which is
238 the overlapping flowering period, no significant differences were found across the different plants
239 (Fig. 3). The significant interaction between the species and locations in 2009 for the two time
240 periods analyzed indicates that the type and intensity of the interactions between the plants and
241 Lepidoptera differed among the localities (Table 1).

242 *S. lividus* exhibited the highest levels of Diptera compared with *S. vulgaris* and *S.*
243 *inaequidens* during the entire reproductive plant season and during May and June in 2009 and 2010
244 (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). *S. pterophorus* was not associated with Diptera in any location or sampling year.

245 The Hemiptera abundance varied across species in 2009 and 2010, although this trend was
246 only marginally significant for the entire reproductive period in 2009 (Table 1). The levels of
247 Hemiptera, however, were not consistent across the years. In 2009, the exotic *Senecio* species
248 presented significantly higher levels of Hemiptera compared to the native *Senecio* species (*S.*
249 *inaequidens* exhibited the highest levels) during the two sampling periods considered (Fig. 2 and Fig.
250 3). In 2010, the levels of Hemiptera were lowest in *S. pterophorus* compared with the other species

251 during the two sampling periods, whereas the abundance in *S. inaequidens* was highest during May
252 and June (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

253 The parasitoid abundance did not differ between the plant species in 2009. In 2010, this trend
254 was significant (Table 1), but post-hoc comparisons did not reveal any differences between any pairs
255 of species (data not shown).

256 One third of the collected Lepidoptera and Diptera larvae were reared to adulthood and
257 identified at the species level. The rest of the specimens (17 Noctuidae, eight Geometridae, 117
258 Pyralidae Lepidoptera, and 1,809 Tephritidae Diptera) were classified at the family level. Of the 19
259 insect species identified, 14 were associated with the alien *S. inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus*. Of
260 these, only five (two Diptera and three Hemiptera) were also found on native *Senecio* host plants,
261 which indicates a process of host switching within plant genera. The remaining nine species, all of
262 which were Lepidoptera, were absent on the native *Senecio* species, which suggests that their
263 original host plants belonged to other species that were not included in this study.

264 Sixteen species (84%) were polyphagous (Table 2 and Fig. 4). However, the analysis of the
265 number of individuals collected revealed that the specialist herbivores were predominant (Fig. 4).
266 The *Senecio* specialist *Sphenella marginata* (Diptera: Tephritidae) was the most abundant and widely
267 distributed species, representing 20% of the collected and 80% of the identified specimens.
268 *Sphenella* was found in 46.4% of the *S. lividus* plants, 20.0% of the *S. inaequidens* plants, and 8.2%
269 of the *S. vulgaris* plants and was not present in any *S. pterophorus* plants. Other abundant specialists
270 were *Aphis haroi* (Hemiptera: Aphididae), which was found in all *Senecio* species, and *Phycitodes*
271 *albatella* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae), which was associated with the exotic species *S. inaequidens* and
272 *S. pterophorus* (Table 2). Of the herbivores reared in the laboratory, 7.6% were parasitized to yield a
273 total of 205 specimens from eight different species (Table 3). The most abundant parasitoid species
274 was Hymenoptera *Pteromalus* sp., which is hosted by a Diptera Tephritidae species, most likely

275 *Sphenella marginata*, and associated with *S. vulgaris*, *S. lividus*, and *S. inaequidens* (Table 3). The
276 hosts of the other parasitoid species could not be determined.

277 The performance of *Sphenella* and the parasitoid *Pteromalus* varied across the host plants.
278 The *Sphenella* specimens feeding on *S. lividus* presented a significantly higher body mass compared
279 with the insects associated with *S. vulgaris* and *S. inaequidens* (one-way ANOVA, $F = 26.11$, $P <$
280 0.001 ; Fig. 5). Specimens of *Pteromalus* associated with *S. lividus* were also larger compared with
281 specimens associated with *S. vulgaris* and *S. inaequidens* (one-way ANOVA, $F = 6.58$, $P < 0.005$;
282 Fig. 5).

283

284 **Discussion**

285

286 Two hypotheses have been proposed to explain the changes in the plant-herbivore assemblages in
287 invaded communities. The Enemy Release hypothesis (Keane & Crawley, 2002) suggests that local
288 herbivores are better adapted to their native host plants than to the alien plants and that these
289 herbivores thus have a higher preference toward the native plant species. Conversely, the Biotic
290 Resistance hypothesis (Levine et al., 2004; Parker & Hay, 2005) states that exotic plants are more
291 susceptible to local herbivores compared with native hosts because they exhibit a lack of resistance
292 mechanisms to reduce herbivore damage. In this study, Lepidoptera species were more abundant on
293 the exotic species *S. inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus* than in the native species *S. lividus* and *S.*
294 *vulgaris*, which is in accordance with the Biotic Resistance hypothesis. To determine whether this
295 pattern was caused by a higher insect preference for exotic species and not by differences in plant
296 phenology, we compared the herbivore abundance during the overlapping reproductive period for all
297 *Senecio* species (May-June). When the plants co-occurred, the exotic and native plants were equally
298 affected by Lepidoptera. These results suggest that the extended plant phenology of the exotic plants
299 favored new associations with local insects in absence of native *Senecio* plants and that host

300 switching also occurred when both native and exotic plants were available. None of the above
301 mentioned hypotheses explicitly predicts similar herbivory for native and exotic plants, but the
302 absence of enemy release in exotic *Senecio* species is more suggestive of a biotic resistance
303 mechanism. Similarly, the higher or equal levels of Hemiptera in *S. inaequidens* (and in *S.*
304 *pterophorus* in 2010) compared with the native *Senecio* species also supports the Biotic Resistance
305 hypothesis. In contrast, the abundance of Diptera was more consistent with the Enemy Release
306 hypothesis because no insect specimens were found on any individual *S. pterophorus* plant during
307 any sampling period and the amount of Diptera in *S. inaequidens* was lower compared with *S.*
308 *lividus*. However, *S. inaequidens* was not released from Diptera herbivory compared with *S. vulgaris*.

309 The more pronounced host switching in *S. inaequidens* compared with *S. pterophorus* for
310 Hemiptera and Diptera could be explained by differences in the plant invasion history. A longer time
311 since introduction may facilitate host shifting because insect populations are more likely to interact
312 with novel plants and they have a longer time to acclimate or adapt to its unique chemistry (Hawkes,
313 2007; Mitchell et al., 2010). Because *S. pterophorus* was introduced in Europe more recently than *S.*
314 *inaequidens*, local herbivores may be more reluctant to use *S. pterophorus* as a host. In Australia,
315 where *S. pterophorus* was introduced 50 years before than in Europe, the levels of herbivory due to
316 host switching are significantly increased (Castells et al., 2013), which suggests that a longer
317 coexistence time between local insects and novel plants enhances host switching.

318 Most of the identified species in this survey were polyphagous. However, contrary to the
319 assumption that host switching in invaded communities is mainly performed by generalist herbivores
320 (Keane & Crawley, 2002; Parker & Hay, 2005; Doorduyn & Vrieling, 2011), we found that
321 herbivores with a narrow diet breadth were more abundant on exotic plants than polyphagous
322 herbivores. *Sphenella marginata* (Diptera: Tephritidae), which is the most abundant species found in
323 this study, is a fruit feeder specialized on the genus *Senecio* (e.g., *S. aquaticus*, *S. erucifolius*, *S.*
324 *jacobaea*, *S. paludosus*, *S. squalidus*, *S. sylvaticus*, *S. viscosus*, and *S. vulgaris*) (White, 1988) and

325 was found to be associated with the native species *S. vulgaris* and *S. lividus* and the exotic species *S.*
326 *inaequidens* in this study. Other common insect species found in exotic *Senecio* species were also
327 specialists. *Aphis haroi* (Hemiptera: Aphididae), which was previously reported on *S. pyrenaicus*
328 (García Prieto & Nieto Nafría, 2005), and *Phycitodes albatella* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae), which is a
329 microlepidoptera that has been reported on three genera of Asteraceae (*Crepis*, *Solidago*, and
330 *Senecio*) (Roesler, 1973), were found to be associated with *S. inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus*.

331 Host switching by specialist insects may be facilitated by the presence of native species that
332 are phylogenetically close to the introduced plants, e.g., belonging to the same genera, in the invaded
333 community (Mitchell et al., 2006; Verhoeven et al., 2009). Herbivores that have adapted to feed on
334 native plants may readily establish novel interactions with exotic congeners through an immediate
335 ecological fitting because these exotic plants share similar physical and chemical traits with the
336 herbivores' original hosts that facilitate recognition, selection, and resistance (Janzen, 1968; Strong
337 et al., 1984; Pearse & Hipp, 2009; Verhoeven et al., 2009). Under these conditions, we expected that
338 insects specialized on native *Senecio* would easily shift to exotic *Senecio* species. However, the
339 presence of native congeneric plant species in the invaded community was not sufficient to readily
340 determine host switching: *Sphenella marginata* shifted from the native *Senecio* species to *S.*
341 *inaequidens* but not to *S. pterophorus*. The lack of association between *S. pterophorus* and *Sphenella*
342 *marginata* could not be explained by an asynchrony of plant and insect life cycles. Tephritidae
343 develop and pupate within *Senecio* flower heads, and their occurrence is thus limited by the plant's
344 reproductive stage. However, *S. pterophorus* was blooming at the time that the flies were seeking
345 flower heads for oviposition. In fact, *Sphenella marginata* specimens were observed approaching *S.*
346 *pterophorus* in the field (EC personal observation), which suggests that insects recognized the plant
347 as a potential host. The pre-adaptations of *Sphenella marginata* for the consumption of native
348 *Senecio* were not sufficient to ensure the establishment of successful associations with *S.*
349 *pterophorus*. Different species of *Senecio* share the same type of chemical defenses, namely

350 pyrrolizidine alkaloids (Hartmann, 1999), but insects might adapt to feed on individual chemical
351 compounds rather than groups of chemicals (Macel et al., 2005). The *S. pterophorus* chemical
352 composition may constitute a novel weapon (*sensu* Callaway & Ridenour, 2004) that regulates the
353 new assemblages with local herbivores.

354 We also explored whether changes in the host use translated to differences in performance in
355 the two most abundant insects that were surveyed: *Sphenella marginata* and the parasitoid
356 *Pteromalus* sp. Both species presented the highest body mass when associated with *S. lividus*
357 compared with *S. vulgaris* and *S. inaequidens*. These results are highly consistent with host selection
358 in the field. Thus, insects feeding on *S. lividus*, which is the most preferred host plant, exhibited a
359 better performance than insects feeding on the less attacked *S. vulgaris* and *S. inaequidens*. Positive
360 correlations between preference and performance are expected to occur when females ovipositing on
361 the selected host plants maximize their fitness (Jaenike, 1990). *Sphenella marginata* performed better
362 when feeding on *S. lividus*, but the use of *S. inaequidens* was not disadvantageous in the absence of
363 *S. lividus* plants. In fact, *Sphenella marginata* populations most likely benefit from the consumption
364 of *S. inaequidens* because the presence of reproductive individuals of *S. inaequidens* in Montseny
365 Natural Park during the fall offers an alternate food source when no other *Senecio* species are
366 available.

367

368 *Final Remarks*

369

370 Host preference is a main factor for the determination of new assemblages between insects
371 and exotic plants. However, under natural conditions, trophic interactions are additionally
372 constrained by other factors that are not directly related to preference, such as the spatial and
373 temporal distributions of insects and plants, the presence of native plant congeners, the plant invasion
374 history, the abundance of alien species relative to native hosts, the composition of the local insect

375 community, and the phenological synchrony between plants and herbivores (Janzen, 1968; Graves &
376 Shapiro, 2003). Laboratory bioassays can provide valuable information on the ability of insect
377 species to recognize, select, and develop in new hosts, but these studies are insufficient to elucidate
378 which interactions will actually occur in the field. Unfortunately, few of the studies that have
379 evaluated host switching accounted for the complexity and idiosyncrasy of natural conditions. This
380 study was designed to provide information on the new plant-herbivore interactions that are
381 established in the field when native plant congeners are present. We performed a long-term replicated
382 plant survey in relatively small areas to ensure that all of the plant species were exposed to the same
383 arthropod communities and microclimate conditions. However, we acknowledge that other factors,
384 such as plant abundance in the surveyed areas and differences in the biological features between
385 native and exotic plants, including plant phenology and chemical defenses, may also determine the
386 host switching process. Our results show that plant novelty was not the only predictor of herbivore
387 abundance. Host switching was generally increased for Lepidoptera and Hemiptera, as expected by
388 the Biotic Resistance hypothesis, but decreased for Diptera, in accordance with the Enemy release
389 hypothesis. Of the exotic species surveyed, *S. inaequidens*, which had coexisted longer with the local
390 fauna in the study site, generally experienced higher herbivory compared with the exotic *S.*
391 *pterophorus*. Contrary to previous results, host switching was quantitatively more common for
392 specialist insects, but the presence of phylogenetically related native species in the invaded
393 community did not ensure an instantaneous association between specialist insects and exotic plants.
394 In conclusion, the insect order, plant phenology, herbivore diet breadth, and time since plant
395 introduction may affect the host switching among *Senecio* congeners. Despite the limitations of field
396 surveys, this work highlights the importance of the study of plant-herbivore associations under the
397 complexity of natural conditions to understand not only the potential interactions that could be
398 established based on insect preference and performance but also the realized interactions under the
399 constraints of field conditions.

400

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526

527

528 Table 1. Effect of plant species and sampling location on the herbivore and parasitoid abundance
 529 during the entire reproductive period and during the overlapping reproductive period. The statistical
 530 results were obtained through ANOVA analyses between all of the plant species (May-June). The
 531 significant differences ($P < 0.05$) are indicated in bold.

			Entire reproductive period		May-June	
			F	<i>P</i> -value	F	<i>P</i> -value
2009	Herbivores					
	Lepidoptera	Species	1.666	0.214	0.915	0.457
		Location	0.928	0.488	0.670	0.652
		Species x Location	3.453	<0.001	1.826	0.037
	Diptera	Species	37.051	<0.001	27.349	<0.001
		Location	5.861	0.002	6.244	0.002
		Species x Location	1.250	0.231	1.056	0.397
	Hemiptera	Species	3.098	0.058	3.527	0.045
		Location	1.193	0.358	1.440	0.273
		Species x Location	7.451	<0.001	10.729	<0.001
	Parasitoids	Species	1.498	0.249	0.527	0.670
		Location	3.668	0.018	3.032	0.039
		Species x Location	1.236	0.241	1.351	0.181
2010	Herbivores					
	Lepidoptera	Species	10.368	<0.001	1.863	0.140
	Diptera	Species	22.692	<0.001	26.542	<0.001
	Hemiptera	Species	16.462	<0.001	24.794	<0.001
	Parasitoids	Species	7.138	<0.001	5.282	0.002

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Table 2. Phytophagous insects feeding on native and exotic *Senecio* host plants at Montseny Natural Park. The sampling was conducted during the reproductive stage for each *Senecio* species in 2009 and 2010. The presence of Lepidoptera and Diptera at a particular month of the year is indicated by roman characters. The aphids were sampled for identification once in May 2010 at Vallfornés; the species presence is indicated by an asterisk.

Order, Family	Species	N ¹	Plant part ²	Type of feeding ³	Natives		Exotics		Diet Breadth (Num. gen/fam ⁴)
					<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	<i>Senecio lividus</i>	<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>	<i>Senecio pterophorus</i>	
Plant reproductive range (sampling period)					XI-VI	IV-VII	V-XII	V-VII	
Lepidoptera									
Noctuidae	<i>Autographa gamma</i> (Linnaeus 1758)	1	V/R	Chewing	-	-	IX	-	75/24
Noctuidae	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i> (Hubner 1808)	4	V/R	Chewing	-	-	XI-XII	-	102/40
Noctuidae	<i>Heliothis peltigera</i> (Denis & Schiffermuller 1775)	1	V/R	Chewing	-	VI	-	-	27/12
Noctuidae	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i> (Fabricius 1775)	2	V	Chewing	-	-	VI	-	4/4
Noctuidae	<i>Thysanoplusia orichalcea</i> (Fabricius 1775)	1	V	Chewing	-	-	X	-	57/24
Geometridae	<i>Eupithecia absinthiata</i> (Clerk 1759)	1	R	Chewing	-	-	XI	-	26/7
Geometridae	<i>Eupithecia unedonata</i> Mabilite 1968	1	R	Chewing	-	-	XI	-	3/3
Geometridae	<i>Eupithecia virgaureata</i> Doubleday 1861	3	R	Chewing	-	-	XI	-	21/6
Geometridae	<i>Gymnoscelis rufifasciata</i> (Haworth 1809)	1	R	Chewing	-	-	IX	-	79/41
Pyralidae	<i>Phycitodes albatella</i> (Ragonot 1887)	22	R	Chewing	-	-	VII, XI	VII	3/1
Diptera									
Agromyzidae	<i>Chromatomyia horticola</i> (Goureau 1851)	7	V	Leaf mining	-	IV-V	V	-	268/36
Tephritidae	<i>Sphenella marginata</i> (Fallen 1814)	709	R	Chewing	V-VI	V-VII	VI-XI	-	1/1
Hemiptera									
Aphididae	<i>Aphis fabae</i> Scopoli 1763	3	V	Sucking	*	*	-	-	574/109
Aphididae	<i>Aphis haroi</i> Nieto Nafria 1974	63	V	Sucking	*	*	*	* ⁵	1/1
Aphididae	<i>Aulacorthum solani</i> Kaltentbach 1843	3	V	Sucking	*	*	-	-	344/76
Aphididae	<i>Brachycaudus cardui</i> Linnaeus 1758	1	V	Sucking	-	*	-	-	115/21
Aphididae	<i>Brachycaudus helichrysi</i> (Kaltenbach 1843)	8	V	Sucking	*	-	-	* ⁵	285/49
Aphididae	<i>Macrosiphum euphorbiae</i> (Thomas 1878)	3	V	Sucking	-	*	*	-	302/82
Aphididae	<i>Myzus persicae</i> Sulzer 1776	5	V	Sucking	*	*	-	-	650/125

¹Number of Lepidoptera and Diptera specimens identified. In the case of aphids, the number of samples collected, each of which contains several individuals, is shown.

²V = Vegetative (leaves or stems); R = reproductive (flowers or fruits).

³Type of feeding for Lepidoptera and Diptera at the immature stage.

⁴Number of genera and families used as host plants based on the literature (see Materials and Methods).

⁵Sampling performed on May 2011.

Table 3. Parasitoids associated with herbivores feeding on native and exotic *Senecio* host plants at six locations in Montseny Natural Park. The collection month for each species is indicated by roman characters.

Order, Family	Species	N	Feeding strategy	Natives		Exotics	
				<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	<i>Senecio lividus</i>	<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>	<i>Senecio pterophorus</i>
Diptera							
Tachinidae	<i>Voria ruralis</i>	1	Endoparasitoid	-	-	IX	-
Hymenoptera							
Braconidae	<i>Aleiodes</i> sp.	1	Endoparasitoid	-	-	VI	-
Braconidae	<i>Bracon</i> sp.	1	Ectoparasitoid	-	VI	-	-
Eulophidae	<i>Chrysocharis pubicornis</i> (Zetterstedt 1838)	2	Endoparasitoid	-	V	V	-
Ichneumonidae	<i>Hyposoter didymator</i> (Thunberg 1824)	4	Endoparasitoid	-	VI	-	VI
Ichneumonidae	<i>Tromatobia</i> sp.	1	Endoparasitoid	-	VI	-	-
Ichneumonidae	<i>Syrphophilus bizonarius</i> (Gravenhorst 1829)	1	Endoparasitoid	-	-	VI	-
Pteromalidae	<i>Pteromalus</i> sp.	194	Endoparasitoid	V-VI	V-VII	VI-XI	-

Figure captions

Fig. 1 Study sites at Montseny Natural Park, Catalonia, NE Spain. Each dot represents a 600-m-diameter location where native (*S. vulgaris*, *S. lividus*) and alien *Senecio* species (*S. inaequidens* and *S. pterophorus*) co-occur. Between four and 32 individual plants per species and location were surveyed for the presence of herbivores every 10 to 15 days during the plant reproductive period. The location codes are the following: Vallfornés –VF–, Can Bosc –CB–, Santa Susanna –SS–, Can Tarrer –CT–, Can Pere Poc –CP–, and Fogueres de Montsoriu –FM–. The park limits are indicated in bold.

Fig. 2 Abundance of Lepidoptera (a, b), Diptera (c, d), and Hemiptera (e, f) on two native (*S. vulgaris* –SV– and *S. lividus* –SL–) and two exotic plants (*S. inaequidens* –SI– and *S. pterophorus* –SP–) during the entire reproductive plant period in two consecutive years. The abundance was estimated as the number of specimens per plant (for Lepidoptera and Diptera) or the percentage of plants associated with an insect colony (for Hemiptera) divided by the number of visits (mean and SE). The different letters indicate significant differences among the plant species ($P < 0.05$ by Tukey's post-hoc test).

Fig. 3 Abundance of Lepidoptera (a, b), Diptera (c, d), and Hemiptera (e, f) on two native (*S. vulgaris* –SV– and *S. lividus* –SL–) and two exotic plants (*S. inaequidens* –SI– and *S. pterophorus* –SP–) during the overlapping reproductive period (May and June) in two consecutive years. The abundance was estimated as the number of specimens per plant (for Lepidoptera and Diptera) or the percentage of plants associated with an insect colony (for Hemiptera) divided by the number of visits

(mean and SE). The different letters indicate significant differences among the plant species ($P < 0.05$ by Tukey's post-hoc test).

Fig. 4 Richness (a) and abundance (b) of herbivore insects associated with native (*S. vulgaris* –SV– and *S. lividus* –SL–) and exotic plants (*S. inaequidens* –SI– and *S. pterophorus* –SP–) classified by their diet breadth: a single plant genera, a single plant family, and more than one plant family. Values are standardized by the sampling effort (i.e. number of visits per plant).

Fig. 5 Adult body mass of the herbivore *Sphenella marginata* (a) and the parasitoid *Pteromalus* sp. (b) associated with the native *S. vulgaris* (SV) and *S. lividus* (SL) and the exotic *S. inaequidens* (SI). The different letters indicate significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between species. N = 123, 246, and 19, respectively.

Figure 1

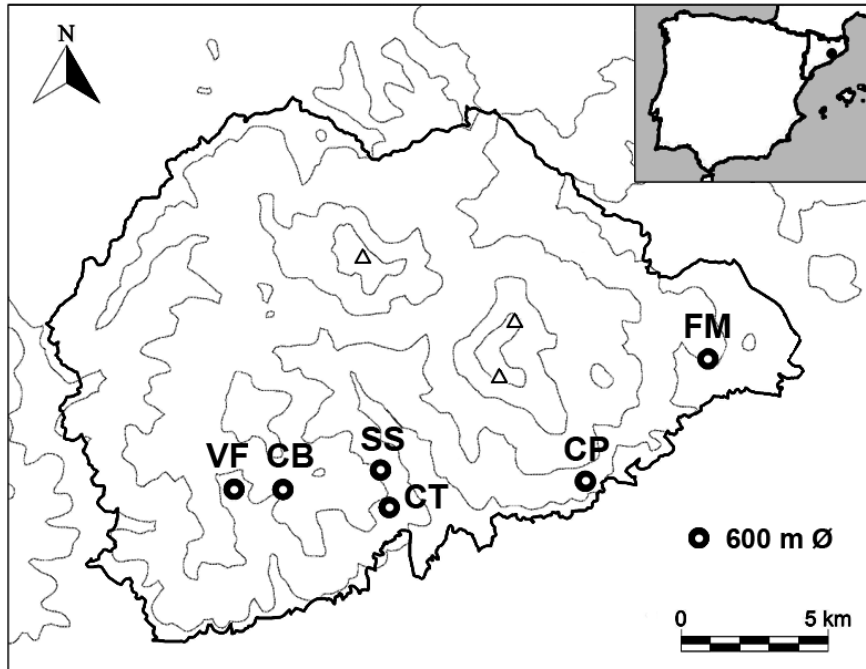


Figure 2

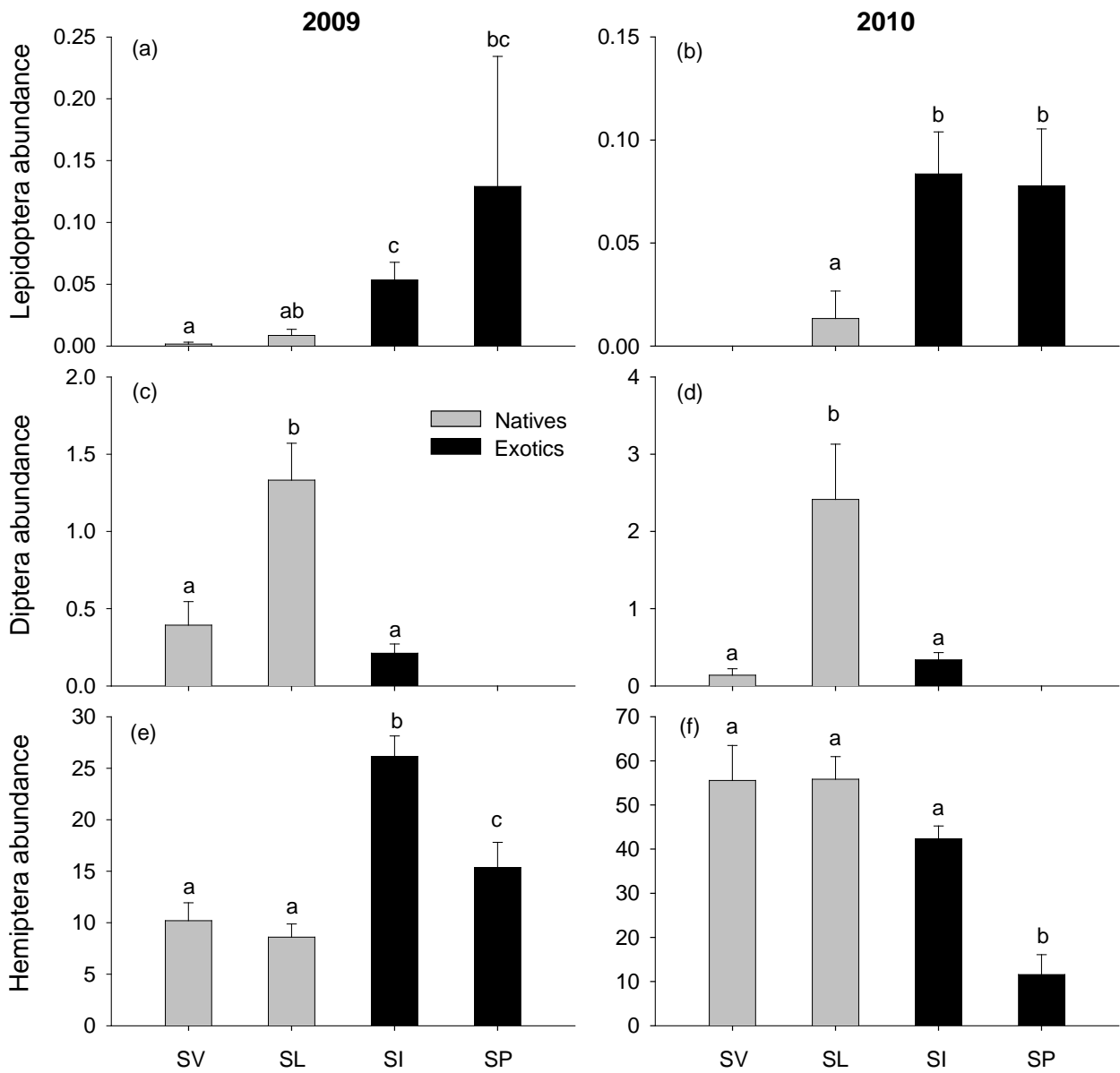


Figure 3

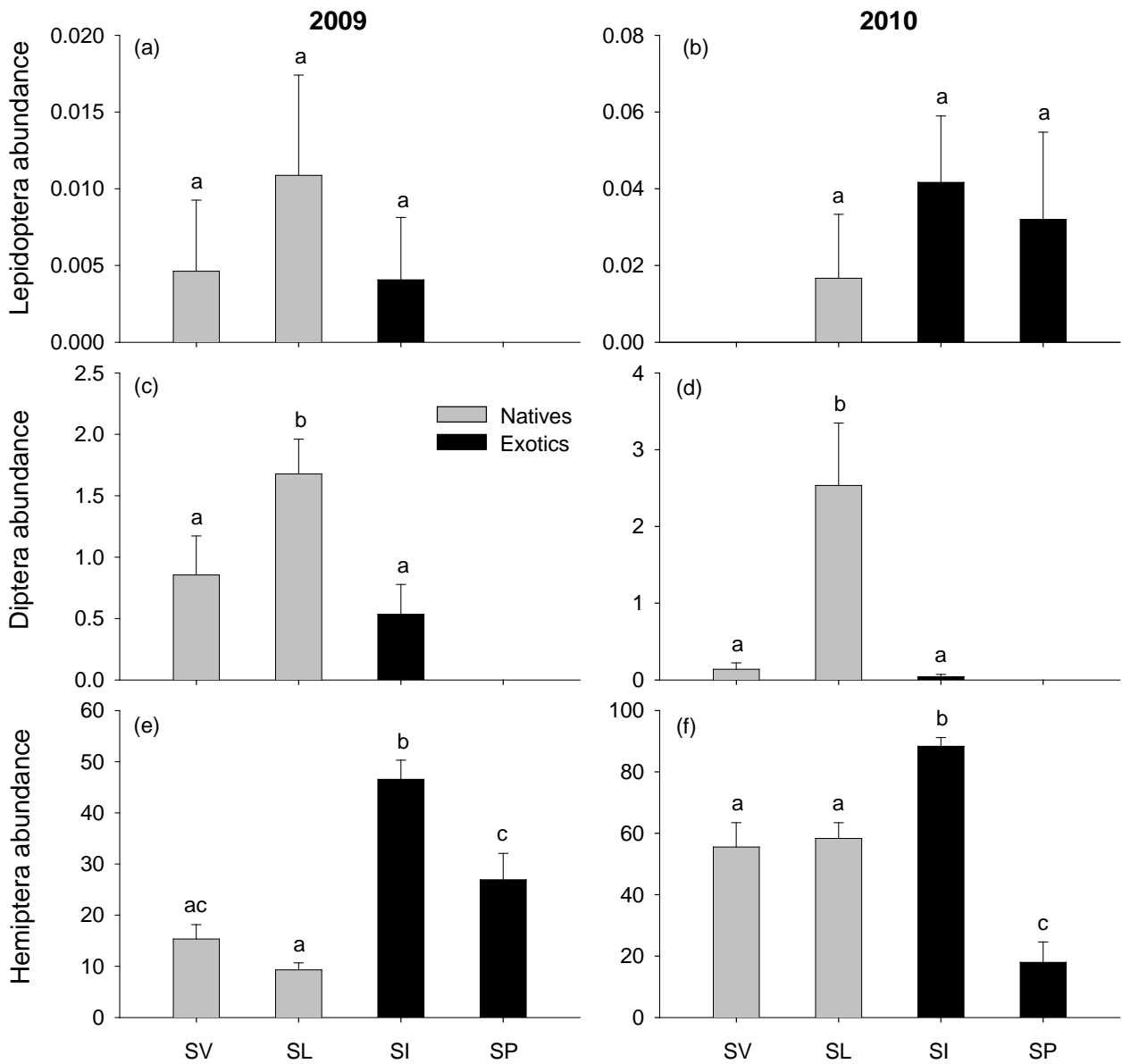


Figure 4

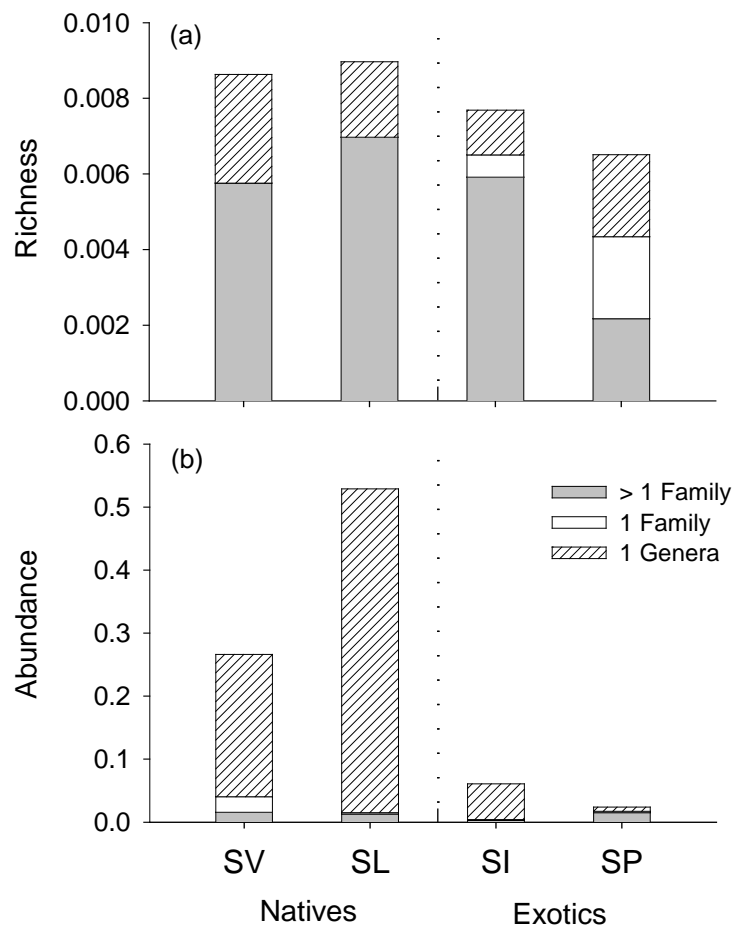


Figure 5

