

Encyclopedia of Insects

RESH V.H. & CARDÉ R.T. (eds.)

Academic Press, 2003, xxviii + 1266 pp.

Three out of four described animal species are insects. Insects dominate our planet not only by their diversity, but also by their importance for terrestrial and limnic ecosystems. Without doubt, insects merit the attention in an encyclopedic form. This new encyclopedia meets this demands in a modern and excellent way.

This giant among entomological encyclopedias contains 271 individual articles contributed by more than 250 experts from 17 countries (including Austria). It is a most comprehensive work which covers all important aspects of entomology. It is richly illustrated and contains about 500 colour images. The book is a valuable source of information, not only on insects and a few other terrestrial arthropods (chapters on mites, spiders, and scorpions), but also on insect-related culture, entomological practice and history.

The content is arranged in 271 chapters in a single A - Z sequence with references cited at the end of each chapter. Forty pages glossary are added. A subject index helps the reader to find the right chapter. The reader can also search for subject-related chapters on four pages (xiii-xvi), where all chapters are listed under the areas "Anatomy", "Physiology", "Behaviour", "Evolution", "Reproduction", "Development and Metamorphosis", "Major Groups and Notable Forms", "Interactions with Other Organisms", "Interactions with Humans", "Habitats", "Ecology", "History and Methodology".

"Major Groups and Notable Forms" mainly refers to chapters on insect orders, but whole chapters also refer to groups of general interest (e.g., *Apis* species, fire ants, ladybugs, wasps) or even single species (*Bombyx mori*, *Drosophila melanogaster*). Anatomy and – even more – physiology of insects are comprehensively explained and well illustrated. Some chapters are dedicated to modern topics like "Insects as Food" or "Forensic Entomology". Some unexpected – but especially interesting and/or informative – chapters can be found in the areas "Interactions with Humans" ("Cultural Entomology", "Extension Entomology", "Folk Beliefs and Superstitions") and "History and Methodology" ("Entomological Societies", "Insect Zoos", "Teaching Resources", "Insects and Stamps", ...).

The "Encyclopedia of Insects" can be recommended to everybody who is interested in nature and wants to achieve (more than) general knowledge on insects; and it is the most comprehensive information for every zoology student and zoologist.