# A KEY TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDERS AND FAMILIES OF INSECTS

by

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### PREFACE

What is it?—Having found an unknown insect, whether a beautiful butterfly or a freakish and formidable thing in the woods, a disconcerting moth or weevil in the pantry, granary, or clothes press, or a caterpillar, bug or beetle devouring vegetables, field crops, flowers or trees—the universal question that flashes in the mind and to the lips is "What is it?"

This little booklet is an attempt to answer the question in a fundamental and scientific way, or at least to start the tyro on his way toward the correct answer; for the complete answer to even so simple a question may involve considerable work. Even with the most extensive entomological library at hand, the beginner or the professional, would be well-nigh helpless to determine his insect unless he first knew the order and family to which it belongs. The number of insect kinds is so great and the literature dealing with them so vast that it is necessary to approach the subject in a systematic way in order to make any profitable use of the many books, monographs and bulletins on the subject. The first logical step is to determine the order and family. This booklet has been written with the hope of guiding you to that end.

The student in biology, zoology, ecology or kindred fields, who is not technically trained in entomology, will find this key indispensible. With it he can place an insect in the proper family and then can send his material to the proper specialist for identification to species.

Scope.—This key attempts to cover only the true insects; and only adult insects. True insects may be recognized as those small creatures that possess six legs (arranged in three pairs) and a body made up of three divisions; (a) the head, with eyes, a pair of feelers or antennæ, and the mouthparts; (b) a thorax, bearing the three pairs of legs and often one or two pairs of wings; and (c) an abdomen, which has no appendages except at the tip, where claspers, ovipositor and other feeler-like organs may sometimes be found.

The reader will therefore not expect to determine the names of spiders, ticks, centipedes, scorpions, harvestmen, true worms, slugs or snails with this key, because they are not insects; nor the names of caterpillars, "worms," nymphs, pupæ, chrysalides or cocoons, because they are not adult stages of the insect.

It should also be understood that this key makes no pretense of being complete or exhaustive. The idea has been to make the simplest possible analysis of the families of North American insects which should include perhaps 95 to 99 percent of the specimens found in the average student's collection. To have included the other 1 to 5 percent it would have been necessary to make it so complex and technical that the beginning student could not use it at all. For the more uncommon specimens, not covered by this key, the student is referred to the many special books on entomology, some of which are listed below.

To a considerable degree insects of the same order and to a very large degree those of the same family, have similar habits, habitats, life-cycles and economic importance. So, for the amateur to be able to place an insect in its order, and especially in the correct family, is a genuine accomplishment. This is of fundamental importance to everyone who makes any claim to being a nature student, biologist, zoologist or entomologist. At the same time the student will recognize that such a key as this is only a beginning for his study of insects. Having determined the order and family he will be interested in finding out more about his specimens, especially the common name, habits, and control. Some of the following books he will want to consult as his knowledge grows.

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Felt, Manual of Tree and Shrub Insects, The MacMillan Co., 1924.
Sanderson and Peairs, Insect Pests of Farm, Garden and Orchard, John Wiley and Sons, 1921.
Herrick, Manual of Injurious Insects, Henry Holt & Co., 1925.
Metcalf and Flint, Destructive and Useful Insects, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1928.
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### PREFACE [Continued]

How to Use This Key.—The pages that follow may be likened to a system of highways in which every turn involves a choice between two forks of the road and in which no two roads lead to the same end. From the very first number the correct choice must be made every time or the final destination cannot be correct.

The characters given are arranged in couplets bearing the same number but different letters as 1a, 1b; or 123a, 123b. The two parts of any couplet are opposing or partly opposing characters. No insect can fit both; every insect should fit one or the other.

With a given insect in hand you should read both parts of the first couplet—"1a, Wingless Insects—1b, Winged Insects." If this particular specimen has wings, read next, couplet 37; if it does not have wings read next, couplet 2, as directed by the figure at the end of that line whose description best fits the specimen. If it has two wings (37a) go next to couplet 38, if four wings (37b) go next to couplet 76. Continuing in this way to select the alternative which best agrees with the specimen in hand, you should come presently to a couplet which ends in a name, preceded by "Order" as couplet 39a "Order DIPTERA." This should be the order name of the specimen being keyed. Following the order name is another number (for example 40, in the case cited) leading eventually to the family name of the insect being keyed. Continue until a name without a following number is reached.

The Figures.—Wherever a star (\*) appears in the couplet, one or more figures will be found at the top of the page bearing the same number as the couplet. The figures should make plain to anyone the nature of the character described. Often there are several figures illustrating the same point and bearing the same number. Or two different points in the same couplet may be illustrated, in which case very different figures will bear that same number. Figures and descriptions should be used together. If a point is reached where neither alternative fits the specimen, you should retrace your steps to the couplet where you had most doubt about your choice and try the other alternative from that point. If that does not eventually fit, either (a) you have made an earlier mistake in choice or (b) the specimen belongs to one of the more unusual species that is not included in this key.

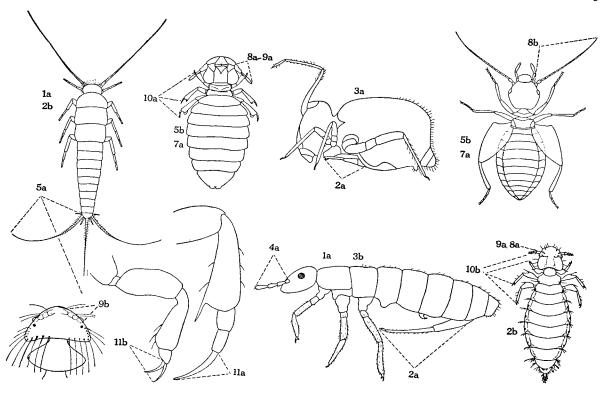
To Teachers.—Most students are interested in the names of insects. This is a good place to begin in entomology, biology or nature study. Teachers of these subjects in high school or college will find the devotion of a considerable amount of time to insects, a valuable feature of their courses. No better training for the logical mind, the seeing eye and the skillful fingers can be found than the preparation and determination of a good collection of insects. Perhaps the best way to learn the morphology of insects (so often a dry and uninteresting, though very essential part, of a course) is to attempt to "key the insects down," which is morphology with a purpose.

Acknowledgments.—The earlier editions of this key have been widely used in high schools, summer camps, biological stations, colleges and universities, and the authors are indebted to numerous colleagues for helpful suggestion. The key characters used have been drawn from so wide a variety of technical works that it is impossible to credit them specifically. Among the figures redrawn for this work the authors are glad to credit the following, of which the original source is known: Fig. 3a from Lubbock; 8b from Howard; 33a from Tower; 48a from Johannsen; 41a and 73b from Folsom; 131a from Hopkins; 148b, 149a, 152a and 157b from Comstock; 196a, 196b, and 198b from Imms; 193a from Riley; and 200a from Packard. A number of figures were redrawn from the published or unpublished works of the senior author. The remainder were prepared especially for this work by Miss E. Haban, for whose painstaking and enthusiastic work the authors are greatly indebted.

It is hoped that these few pages will make simple and easy a path that is too often formidable to the beginner, and open to the nature lover a wonderful world, whose marvels continually increase, the more man exposes them to common knowledge. Corrections and criticisms of the key will be gratefully received by

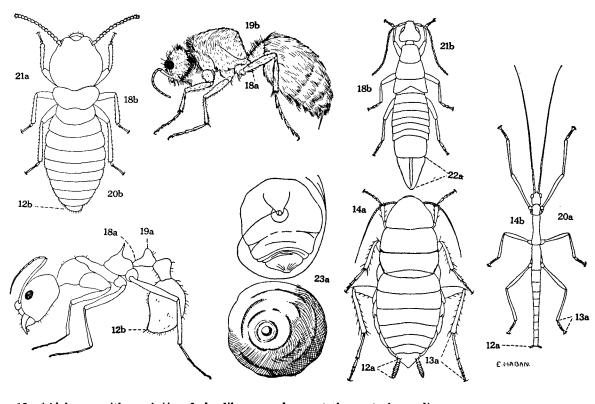
THE AUTHORS.

October, 1928

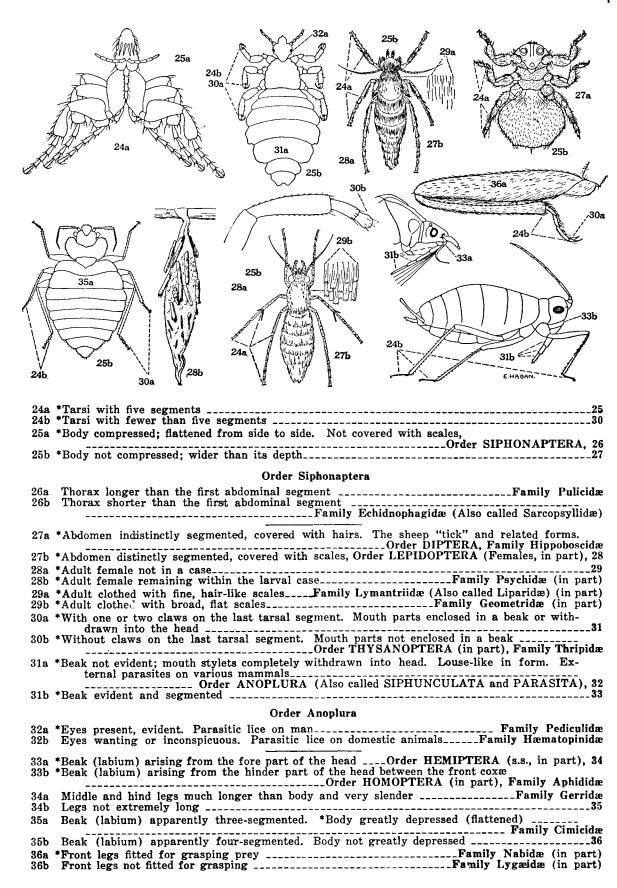


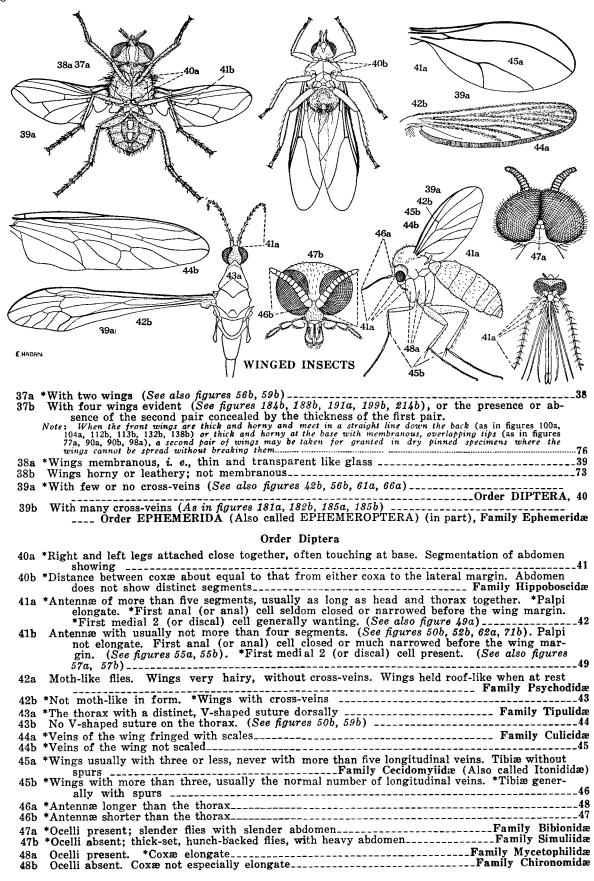
# A KEY TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDERS AND FAMILIES OF INSECTS

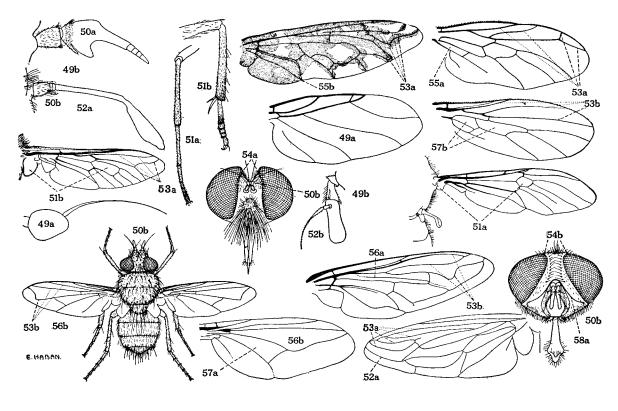
1a 1b	*Wingless insects (See also figures 2b, 18a, 35a, etc.)
	WINGLESS INSECTS
2a 2b	*Abdomen provided with a spring, segments often fused, not more than six abdominal segments visibleOrder COLLEMBOLA, 3 *Abdomen not provided with a spring, with more than six segments visible in the abdomen5
	Order Collembola
3a 3b 4a 4b	*Abdominal segments fused, body globose
5a	*Abdomen with three terminal, antennal-like appendagesOrder THYSANIRA Family Lenismatidm
5b	*Abdomen without antennal-like appendages Order THYSANURA, Family Lepismatidæ
6 <b>a</b> 6b	Mouth parts fitted for chewing (See figures 78b, 102a, 102b, 137b, 140a)
7a 7b	*Louse-like insects (See also figures 10b, 20b, 31a)8 Insects of various forms, not louse-like12
8a 8b	*Antennæ with five segments or fewer than five segmentsOrder MALLOPHAGA, 9 *Antennæ with more than five segmentsOrder CORRODENTIA (in part), Family Atropidæ
	Order Mallophaga
9a 9b	*Antennæ plainly visible, three- or five-segmented10 *Antennæ more or less concealed, four-segmented11
10a	*Tarsi with one claw (See also figure 11a). *Antennæ three-segmented. Infesting mam-
10b	*Tarsi with two claws (See also figure 11b.) *Antennæ five-segmented. Infesting birds
11a 11b	*Tarsi with one claw. Infesting mammalsFamily Gyropidæ *Tarsi with two claws. Infesting birdsFamily Liotheidæ



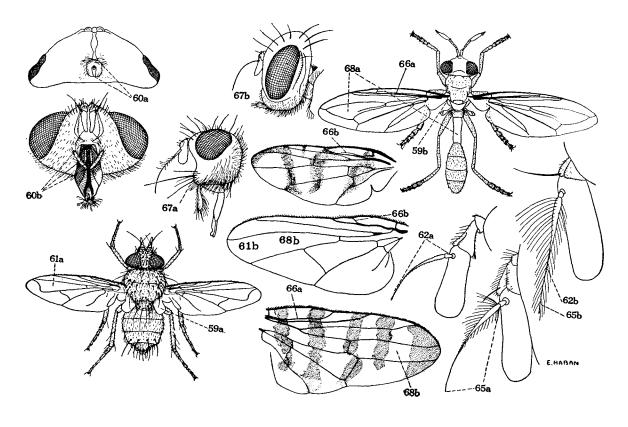
12a *Abdomen with cerci (i.e., feeler-like appendages at the posterior end)Order ORTHOPTERA (in part), 13	
12b *Abdomen without cerci16	
Order Orthoptera	
13a *Tarsi five-segmented14 13b Tarsi three- or four-segmented (See figures 24b, 90b, 98a, 99a, 135b, 138a)15	
14a *Body oval, flattenedFamily Blattidæ (in part) 14b *Body elongate, not flattenedFamily Phasmidæ	
15a Tarsi three-segmentedFamily Gryllidæ (in part) 15b Tarsi four-segmentedFamily Tettigoniidæ (Also called Locustidæ) (in part)	
16a Hind legs fitted for leaping (See figures 186a, 138b); hind femora much thickened Orthoptera, 17	
16b Legs not fitted for leaping; hind femora not much thickened. (See figures 18a, 18a)18	
17a Tarsi three-segmentedFamily Gryllidæ (in part) 17b Tarsi four-segmentedFamily Tettigoniidæ (Also called Locustidæ) (in part)	
18a *Base of abdomen constricted, much narrower than the thorax, Order HYMENOPTERA (in part), 19 18b *Base of abdomen nearly as broad as thorax (See also figures 14a, 14b)20	
Order Hymenoptera	
19a *Peduncle of abdomen with a nodus or swelling. Body nearly bareFamily Formicidæ 19b *Peduncle of abdomen without a nodus. Bright-colored, very hairy species Family Mutillidæ (Females)	
20a *Body very slender, linearOrder ORTHOPTERA (in part), Family Phasmidæ 20b *Body broader, not linear21	
21a *Body ant-like in form, but base of abdomen not constrictedOrder ISOPTERA (in part), Family Termitidæ (in part) 21b *Body not ant-like in form22	
22a *End of abdomen provided with forceps. (See also figure 101a)	
23a *Small, scale-like insects, usually without legs, eyes or antennæ and usually covered with a scale beneath which the insect lives. Sometimes legs and antennæ are present, the scale wanting, and the insect covered with a mealy powderOrder HOMOPTERA, Family Coccidæ (in part)  23b Insect not scale-like or sedentary. Legs and antennæ always present24	
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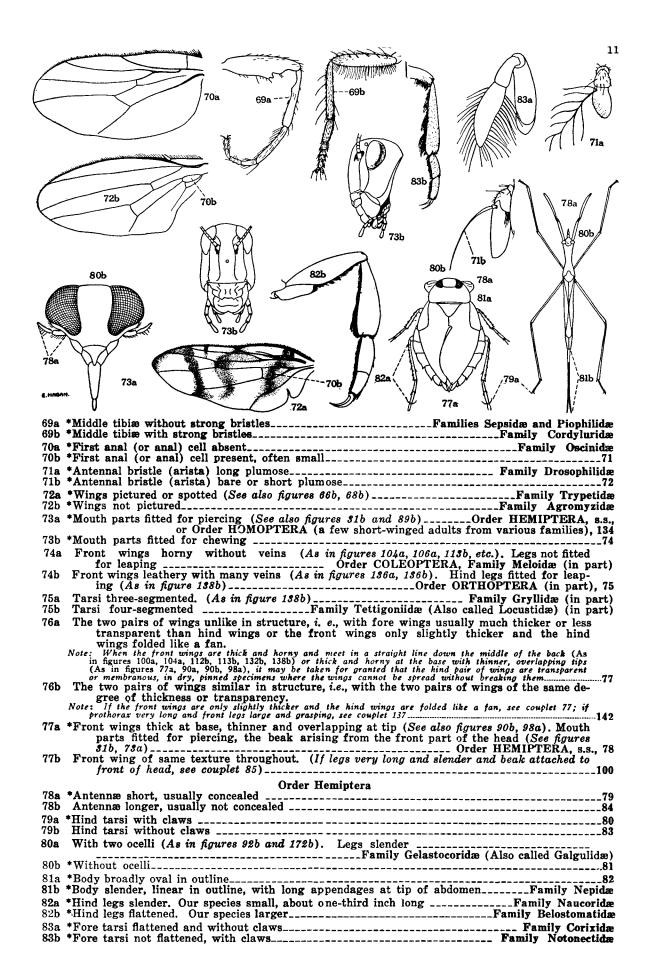


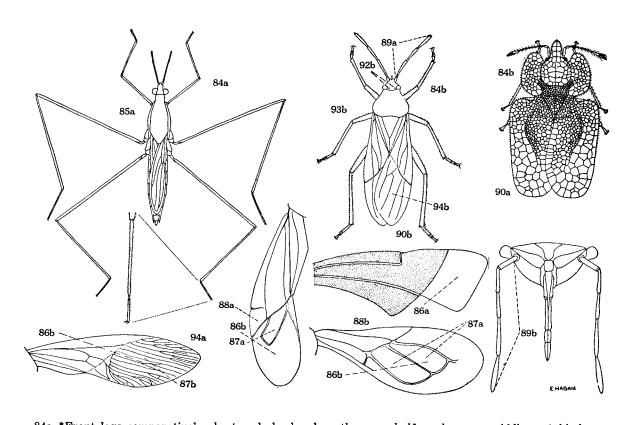


	*Antenna consisting of a single globular segment with a bristle. *No closed cells in the wing; two heavy veins near the costal margin and several lighter ones running obliquely backwardFamily Phoridæ
49b	*Antenna of more than two segments; though the basal one may be very small (See also figures 62, 65, 71)50
	*Antennæ of five or more segments; or if three-segmented the third segment is composed of several, closely applied, segment-like rings; and often with a triangular or thumb-like
50Ъ	expansion at base of third segment51 *Antennæ three- or four-segmented, the third segment not ringed52
51a	*First medial two (or discal) cell small, hardly longer than broad, or rounded. *Tibiæ with-
51b	out spurs at tip. *Tegulæ (or squamæ) smallFamily Stratiomyiidæ *First medial two (or discal) cell several times as long as broad. *Middle tibiæ with two spurs at tip. *Tegulæ (or squamæ) largeFamily Tabanidæ
52a	*Antennæ of four segments, clavate. *Medius 1 + 2 (fourth vein) of wing curves forward to wing margin before the tip of wing. Large fliesFamily Mydaidæ
52b	*Antennæ three-segmented; the third segment usually with a dorsal or terminal bristle53
53a 53b	*Radial vein four-branched (third vein forked)54 *Radial vein three-branched (third vein not forked or branched)56
54a 54b	*Vertex of the head distinctly hollowed out between the eyes. Large, bristly flies_Family Asilidæ *Vertex of the head not hollowed out55
55a 55b	*First anal (or anal) cell closed remote from the border of the wingFamily Empididæ *First anal (or anal) cell narrowly open, or closed close to the border of the wing. Often hairy flies with pictured wingsFamily Bombyliidæ
56a	*A false vein between radius 4 + 5 (third vein) and medius 1 + 2 (fourth vein) bisecting the radio-medial (anterior) cross-vein. Flies often banded with black and yellow, resembling bees or waspsFamily Syrphidæ
56b	*Without a false vein57
57 <b>a</b>	*First medial 2 (or discal) and medial (or second basal) cells not separated, the first medial 2 (or discal) cell open to the base of the wing. Small, brilliantly-colored flies
57b	*First medial 2 (or discal) cell complete and separated from base of wing by a cross-vein.  Usually medium to large size flies; if small, not brilliantly-colored58
	*Head with a curving suture (the frontal suture), usually beginning on the face, running around above the antennæ and down on the other side59  Head without such suture (See figure 54a)Family Bombyliidæ

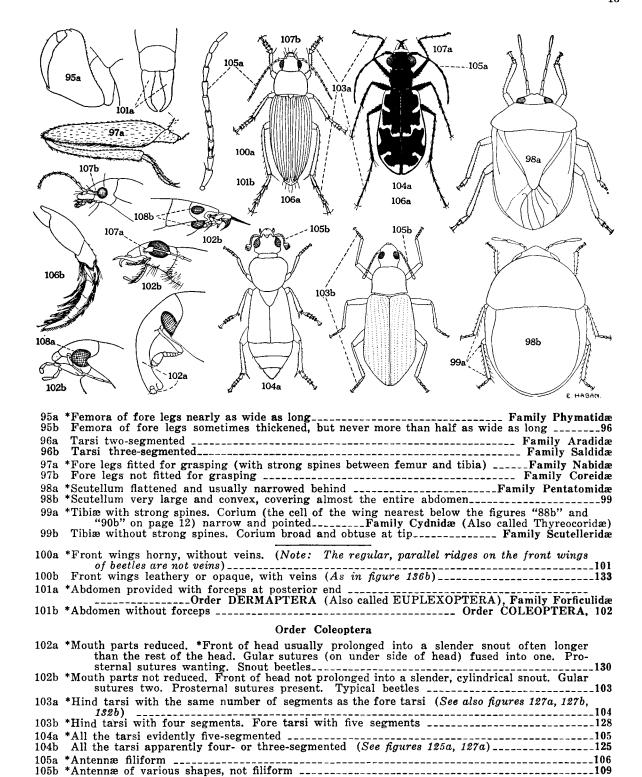


59a *Tegulæ (squamæ) large
60a *Oral opening small. Mouth parts small. Palpi wanting, Family Œstridæ, including Gastrophilidæ 60b *Oral opening of the usual size61
61a *Fifth radial (or first posterior) cell narrowed in the border of the wing62 61b *Fifth radial (or first posterior) cell not narrowed in the border of the wingFamily Anthomyiidæ
62a *Antennal bristle (arista) bare or short plumoseFamily Tachinidæ 62b *Antennal bristle (arista) plumose for part of its length at least63
Base of abdomen with conspicuous bristles. Legs unusually longFamily Dexiidæ Base of abdomen without large bristles64
64a Color metallic blue or green
65a *Base of antennal bristle (arista) plumose; tip bareFamily Sarcophagidæ 65b *Antennal bristle (arista) plumose to the tipFamily Muscidæ
66a *Subcostal (or auxiliary) vein present, distinct67 66b *Subcostal (or auxiliary) vein absent or incomplete (See also figures 70a, 70b)70
67a *Oral vibrissæ present, i. e., a distinct large bristle on each side of the face near oral margin69 67b *Oral vibrissæ absent68
68a *Fifth radial (or first posterior) cell narrowed (As in figure 61a) or closed (As in figure 68a), toward the border of the wing. *Abdomen often narrowed toward the base
68b *Fifth radial (or first posterior) cell no narrowed toward the border of the wing. Wings usually picturedFamily Ortalidæ





84a *Front legs comparatively short and slender, less than one-half as long as middle and hind legs, which are very long and slender85
84b *Front legs not remarkably shorter than other legs; or, if so, thick and modified for grasping. Tarsi not split86
85a *Body elongate. Beak (labium) four-segmented Family Gerridæ 85b Body oval. Beak (labium) three-segmented Family Veliidæ
86a *Membrane of the wing without closed cells or veinsFamily Anthocoridæ 86b *Membrane with either closed cells or veins, or both87
87a *Membrane with one or two large closed cells, without additional longitudinal veins88 87b *Membrane with longitudinal veins (See also figure 94b). Closed cells usually small or wanting89
88a *Wings with a cuneus. Beak (labium) apparently four-segmented
Family Miridæ (Also called Capsidæ) 88b *Wings without a cuneus. Beak (labium) apparently three-segmentedFamily Reduviidæ
89a *Antennæ three- or four-segmented
90a *Fore wings resembling a net-workFamily Tingitidæ 90b *Fore wings not resembling a net-work91
91a Beak (labium) apparently four-segmented92 91b Beak (labium) apparently three-segmented95
92a Without ocelli (See figure 80b) Family Pyrrhocoridæ 92b *With ocelli93
93a Body very slender. Antennæ longer than the bodyFamily Berytidæ (Also called Neididæ) 93b *Body not slender. Antennæ shorter than the body94
94a *Membrane with many branching veins97
94b *Membrane with a few, usually five, unbranched veinsFamily Lygæidæ

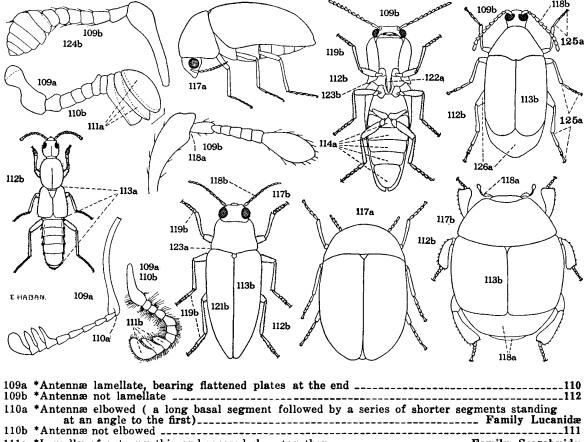


106b \*Legs fitted for swimming, being flattened and fringed with stiff hairs, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_108 107a \*Head wider than the thorax. \*Antennæ inserted on the front above the base of the mandibles. \*Wings usually spotted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Family Cicindelidæ
107b \*Head narrower than the thorax. \*Antennæ inserted on the side of the head between the base
of the mandible and the eye. \*Wings usually not spotted \_\_\_\_\_\_ Family Carabidæ

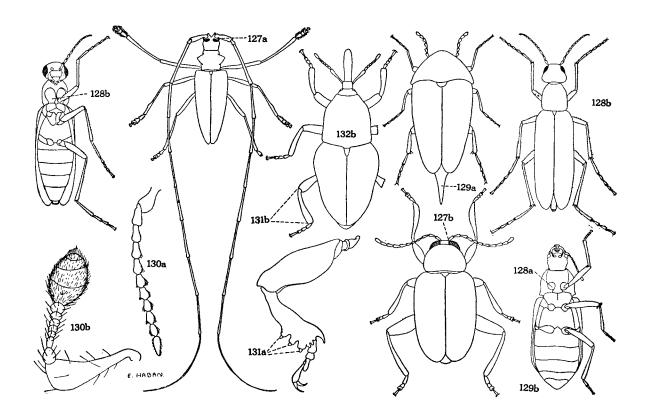
108a \*With one pair of compound eyes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_Family Dytiscidæ
108b \*With two pairs of compound eyes i.e., each eye divided \_\_\_\_\_\_Family Gyrinidæ

Family Dytiscidæ

106a \*Legs fitted for walking or running \_\_\_\_

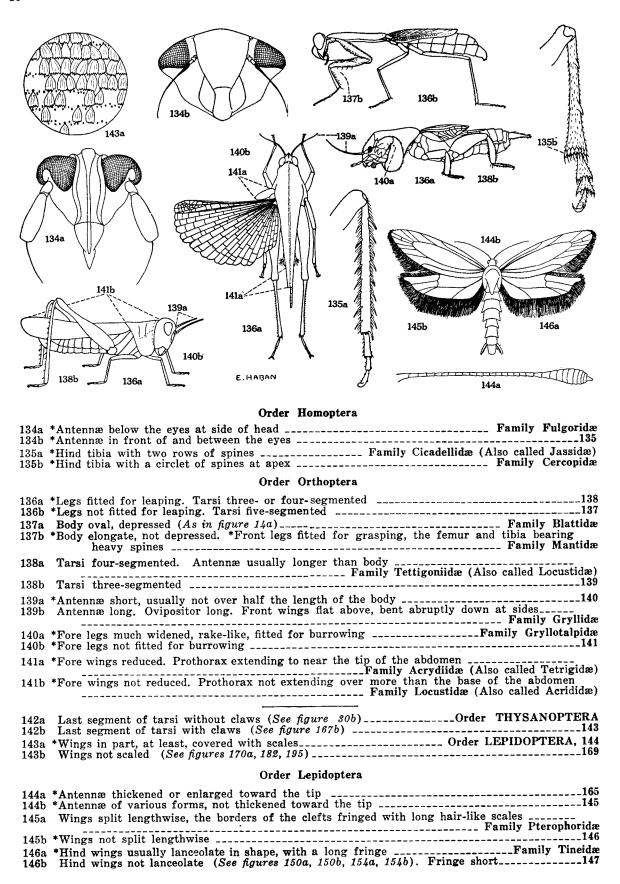


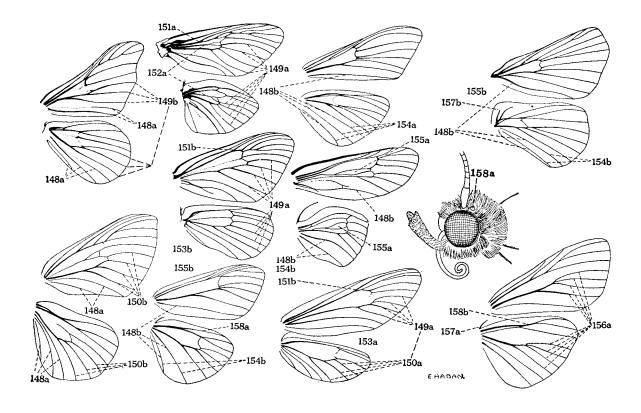
109b *Antennæ not lamellate112
110a *Antennæ elbowed ( a long basal segment followed by a series of shorter segments standing at an angle to the first)Family Lucanidæ
110b *Antennæ not elbowed111
111a *Lamellæ of antennæ thin and pressed close togetherFamily Scarabæidæ 111b *Lamellæ of antennæ not thin and not pressed close togetherFamily Passalidæ
112a Aquatic insects. Legs fitted for swimming (As in figure 106b) Family Hydrophilidæ 112b *Terrestrial insects. Legs not fitted for swimming 113
113a *Elytra (front wings) covering basal segments of abdomen onlyFamily Staphylinidæ 113b *Elytra (front wings) covering most of abdomen114
114a *Ventral abdominal segments five117 114b Ventral abdominal segments more than five115
115a Ventral abdominal segments six Family Silphidæ 115b Ventral abdominal segments more than six116
116a Abdomen provided with light-giving organs Family Lampyridæ 116b Abdomen not provided with light-producing organs Family Cantharidæ
117a *Head bent under the hood-like prothorax, rarely visible from aboveFamily Ptinidæ 117b *Prothorax not hood-like. Head visible from above118
118a *Antennæ elbowed. *Last two abdominal segments exposed beyond the elytraFamily Histeridæ 118b *Antennæ not elbowed119
119a First segment of tarsi very small120 119b *First segment of tarsi not remarkably smaller than others121
120a Thorax as broad as the elytra (front wings). Head narrower than thoraxFamily Trogositidæ 120b Thorax narrower than the elytra (front wings). Head broader than thoraxFamily Cleridæ
121a Elytra (front wings) truncate, exposing one or two abdominal segments (As in figure 118b)  Family Nitidulidæ  121b *Elytra (front wings) entire, covering the abdomen122
121b *Elytra (front wings) entire, covering the abdomen122
122a *Pro-sternum with a spine which fits into a groove in the meso-sternum123 122b No spine on the pro-sternum124
123a *Prothorax closely joined to the abdomen; hind angles not prolongedFamily Buprestidæ 123b *Prothorax closely joined to abdomen; hind angles usually prolongedFamily Elateridæ
124a Front coxæ not conical, not prominent. Antennæ moniliformFamily Cucujidæ 124b Front coxæ conical, prominent. *Antennæ capitate or clavateFamily Dermestidæ
125a *All the tarsi apparently four-segmented 126 125b All the tarsi apparently three-segmented Family Coccinellidæ
126a Front prolonged into a short snout or muzzle. *Tip of abdomen exposed beyond the ends of the short elytra. *Hind femora thickenedFamily Mylabridæ (Also called Bruchidæ)
126b Front not prolonged. Tip of abdomen not usually exposed127



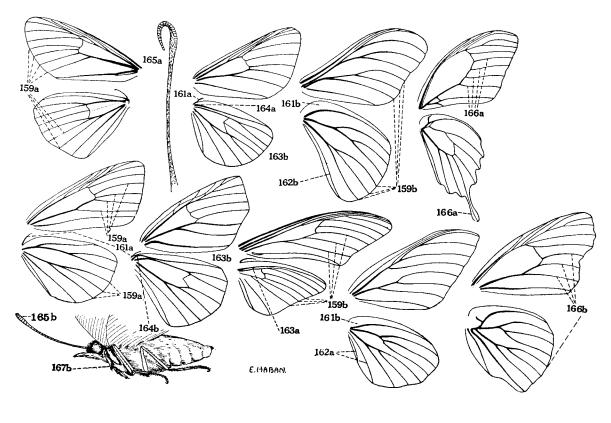
127a *Antennæ usually as long as, or longer than, the head and thorax; their insertion usually emarginating the eyes. Body elongate Family Cerambycidæ
127b *Antennæ usually shorter than the head and thorax, not at all surrounded at the base by the  eyes Family Chrysomelidæ
128a *Front coxal cavities closed behind. *Head narrower than the prothorax, without distinct neck129
128b *Front coxal cavities open behind. *Head as wide as the prothorax, with a visible neck Family Meloidæ
129a *Abdomen prolonged in a pointed style behind the elytra (front wings)Family Mordellidæ 129b *Abdomen not prolonged in a pointed style (See also figure 103b) Family Tenebrionidæ
130a *Antennæ straight, not clubbed Family Brenthidæ 130b *Antennæ clubbed131
131a *Tibia serrate. Beak usually wanting Family Scolytidæ 131b *Tibia not serrate132
132a Antennæ not elbowed (As in figure 130a). A raised line on base of thorax Family Anthribidæ

133a Mouth parts fitted for piercing, the beak (labium) arising from the ventral posterior part
of the head, near the front legs (As in figure 169a) Order HOMOPTERA, 134
133b Mouth parts fitted for chewing (As in figure 73b) Order ORTHOPTERA, 136

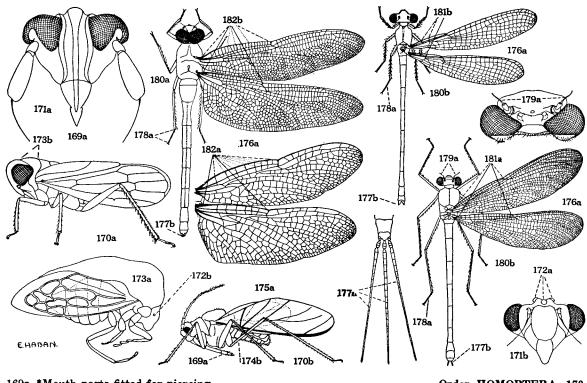




147a Fore wings narrow, more than four times as long as broad. Hind wings and sometimes fore wings in large part devoid of scales and therefore transparentFamily Ægeriidæ (Also called Sesiidæ)
147b Fore wings not especially narrow. Hind wings usually covered with scales148
148a *Anal veins of fore wing two, of hind wing three149 148b *Anal veins of fore wing one, of hind wing usually two, rarely three or one154
149a *Medius 2 and medius 3 joined to cubitus, so that cubitus of fore wing appears four-branched150 149b *Cubitus of fore and hind wings apparently three-branched Family Bombycidæ
150a *Cubitus of fore and hind wings apparently four-branched151 150b *Cubitus of fore wing apparently four-branched, of hind wing three-branchedFamily Eucleidæ
151a *Radius 1 arising before the middle of the discal cell152 151b *Radius 1 arising near the apex of the discal cell153
Large moths. *Stem of medius distinct, dividing the discal cell Family Cossidæ  152b Small moths. Stem of medius not distinct (As in figures 149b, 155b). Discal cell not divided
Family Tortricidæ
Family Tortricidæ  153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings Family Pyromorphidæ  153b *Medium brownish moths with broad wings Family Megalopygidæ
153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings Family Pyromorphidæ
153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings Family Pyromorphidæ 153b *Medium brownish moths with broad wings Family Megalopygidæ  154a *Anal veins of hind wing three Family Pyralididæ
153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings
153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings Family Pyromorphidæ 153b *Medium brownish moths with broad wings Family Megalopygidæ 154a *Anal veins of hind wing three Family Pyralididæ 154b *Anal veins of hind wing two, rarely one Family Pyralididæ 155a *Accessory cells present in fore and hind wings Family Psychidæ 155b *Accessory cells absent Family Psychidæ 156a *Cubitus of fore and hind wings apparently four-branched, i.e., with medius 2 and 3 more
153a *Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings
*Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings
*Small blackish moths with narrow elongate wings



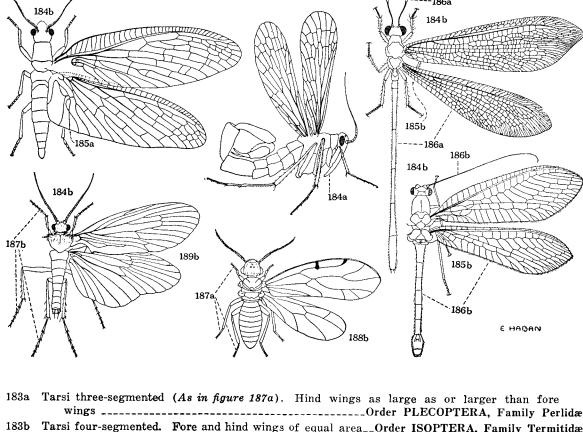
159a 159b	*Cubitus of fore wing apparently four-branched, of hind wing three-branched160 *Cubitus of both wings apparently three-branched161
160a 160b	Moths with strongly contrasted colors Family Agaristidæ Colors of front wings dull grays and browns, not strongly contrastedFamily Noctuidæ
161a	*Frenulum present. Humeral angles (base of front margin) of hind wings not greatly expanded163
1010	*Frenulum absent. *Humeral angles of hind wings expanded162
162a 162b	*Hind wings with two anal veinsFamily Citheroniidæ (Also called Ceratocampidæ) *Hind wings with one anal veinFamily Saturniidæ
	*Subcosta and radius of hind wing united by a strong cross veinFamily Sphingidæ *Subcosta and radius of hind wing not united by a strong cross vein164
164a	*Subcosta of hind wing not bent sharply into the humeral angle. Stout bodied, narrow winged mothsFamily Notodontide
164b	*Subcosta of hind wing bent sharply into humeral angle. Slender-bodied, broad, delicate-winged mothsFamily Geometridæ (Also called Super-family Geometroidea)
165a	*Antennæ usually recurved or hooked at tipFamily Hesperiidæ
165b	*Antennæ distinctly knobbed at tip, not recurved (See also figure 144a)166
166a	*Cubitus of fore wing apparently four-branched. *Hind wing with a tail-like projection along medius 3Family Papilionidæ
166b	*Cubitus of fore wing apparently three-branched. *Usually no tail-like projection along medius 3 of hind wing167
167a	Fore legs well developed168
167b	*Fore legs reduced, the tarsi incompleteFamily Nymphalidæ
168a	Colors yellow, white or orange, usually marked with blackFamily Pieridæ
168 <b>b</b>	Not colored as above. Usually coppery, blue or brownFamily Lycænidæ



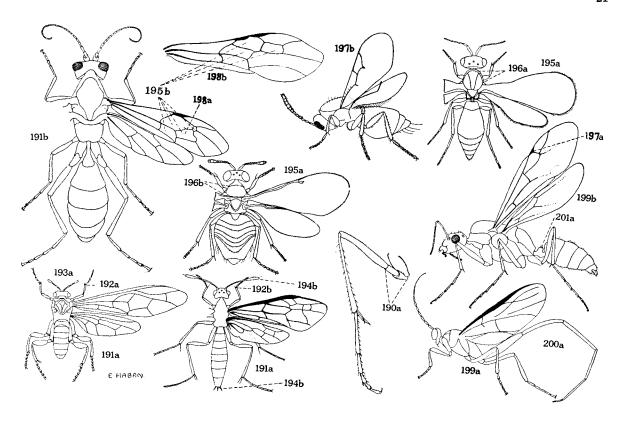
169a \*Mouth parts fitted for piercing\_\_\_\_\_\_Order HOMOPTERA, 170
169b Mouth parts not fitted for piercing; usually for chewing, sometimes for sucking or lapping;
sometimes greatly reduced\_\_\_\_\_\_\_176

Order Homoptera 170a \*Tarsi three-segmented. \*Beak present, evidently arising from the head. \*Antennæ small, 171a \*Antennæ arising below the eyes, on sides of head\_\_\_\_\_\_Family Fulgoridæ
171b \*Antennæ arising in front of or between the eyes\_\_\_\_\_\_172 173a \*Prothorax greatly enlarged upward and backward, often grotesquely shaped, usually reach-174a Hind legs with femora thickened, fitted for leaping\_\_\_Family Chermidæ (Also called Psyllidæ) 174b \*Hind legs not fitted for leaping, the femora slender\_\_\_\_\_175 175a \*Legs long. Wings membranous\_\_\_\_\_\_Family Aphididæ
175b Legs short, wings opaque whitish\_\_\_\_\_\_Family Aleyrodidæ never prolonged downward into a beak-----177a \*Tip of abdomen with long, anal filaments\_\_\_\_\_Order EPHEMERIDA (Also called EPHEMEROPTERA), Family Ephemeridæ 177b \*Abdomen without long anal filaments\_\_\_\_\_\_\_178 178a \*Hind tarsi with fewer than five segments 179
Hind tarsi with five segments 184 179a \*Antennæ short and slender, inconspicuous\_\_\_\_\_Order ODONATA, 180
179b Antennæ conspicuous (See figures 184b, 186b)\_\_\_\_\_\_183 Order Odonata 180a \*Front and hind wings dissimilar in outline, hind wings wider at base\_\_\_\_\_\_\_182
180b \*Front and hind wings similar in outline, distinctly narrow at base\_\_\_\_\_\_\_181 181a \*Wings with not fewer than five antenodal cross-veins, usually many\_\_\_\_\_Family Agrionidæ 181b \*Wings with not more than three antenodal cross-veins, usually two\_\_\_\_\_Family Coenagrionidæ

182a \*Antenodals of first and second row usually meeting each other\_\_\_\_\_Family Libellulidæ 182b \*Antenodals of first and second row not meeting each other\_\_\_\_\_Family Æschnidæ

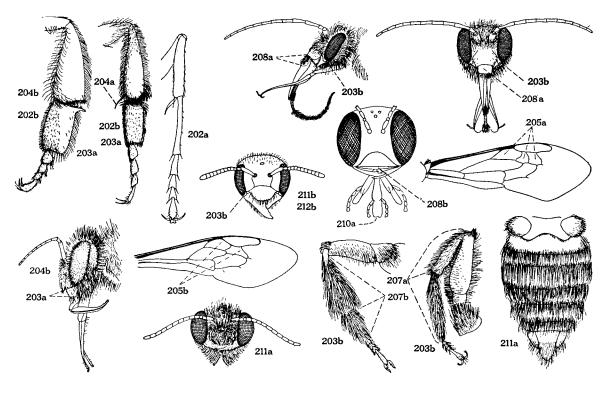


183a	Tarsi three-segmented (As in figure 187a). Hind wings as large as or larger than fore wingsOrder PLECOPTERA, Family Perlidæ
183b	
184a	*Head prolonged into a beak with chewing mouth parts at its tipOrder MECOPTERA, Family Panorpidæ
184b	*Head not prolonged into a beakOrder NEUROPTERA, 185
	Order Neuroptera
185a	*Anal area of hind wings broadFamily Sialidæ
18 <b>5</b> b	*Anal area of hind wings narrow186
186a	*Antennæ usually enlarged toward the tip. *Abdomen longer than the wings
186b	*Antennæ slender, not enlarged toward the tip. *Abdomen shorter than the wings Family Myrmeleonidæ  *Antennæ slender, not enlarged toward the tip. *Abdomen shorter than the wings Family Chrysopidæ
187a	*Tarsi two- or three-segmented188
187 <b>b</b>	*Tarsi four- or five segmented189
188a	Hind wings folded like a fan (See figure 141a). Tarsi three-segmented (As in figure 138b)  Order ORTHOPTERA, Family Gryllidæ (in part)
188b	*Hind wings not folded like a fan. Tarsi two-segmented (See figure 187a)Order CORRODENTIA, Family Psocidæ
189a	Fore wings larger than hind wings (See figures 191a, 191b, 195a, 198b, etc.). Mandibles well developedOrder HYMENOPTERA, 190
189b	*Hind wings as large as, or larger than, fore wings. Mandibles inconspicuousOrder TRICHOPTERA

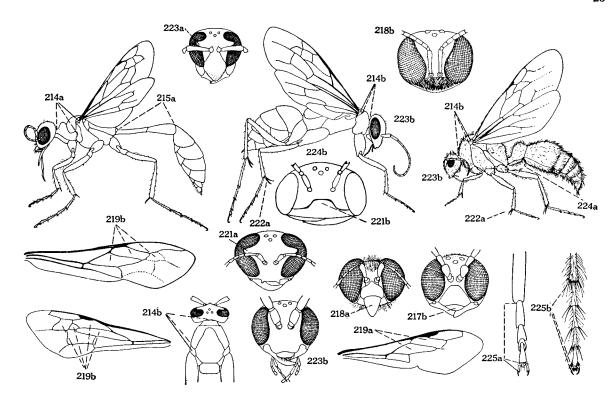


## Order Hymenoptera

190a *Posterior trochanters consisting of two segments; that is, three small segments between the hind femur and the thorax191
190b Posterior trochanters consisting of a single segment; only two small segments between the hind femur and the thorax (As in figures 191a, 191b)199
191a *Abdomen broadly joined to thorax
192a *Tibia of fore leg with two terminal spurs. Ovipositor saw-like193 192b *Tibia of fore legs with one terminal spur. Ovipositor not saw-like194
193a *Antennæ clubbedFamily Cimbicidæ 193b Antennæ not clubbedFamily Tenthredinidæ
194a Ovipositor exserted nearly half as long as abdomen. Antennæ not clubbedFamily Siricidæ 194b *Ovipositor barely exserted; never half as long as abdomen. *Antennæ clubbed_Family Cephidæ
195a *Fore wings without closed cells. Minute insects196 195b *Fore wings with at least one, sometimes several, closed cells197
196a *Pronotum extending to the tegulæ. (See also figure 214b)Family Proctotrypidæ 196b *Pronotum not extending to the tegulæ. (See also figure 214a)Family Chalcididæ
197a *Fore wings with a stigma198 197b *Fore wings without a stigma. The body flea-likeFamily Cynipidæ
198a *Cell first medius 2 (third discoidal) presentFamily Ichneumonidæ 198b *Cell first medius 2 (third discoidal) absentFamily Braconidæ
199a *Hind wing with no closed cells200 199b *Hind wing with at least one closed cell201
200a *Abdomen in female extremely long and slender. *Antennæ long and filiformFamily Pelecinidæ
200b Abdomen short. Antennæ short. Metallic, punctuate insectsFamily Pelecinidæ
201a *Petiole of abdomen with a node or swelling (See also figure 19a). AntsFamily Formicidæ 201b Petiole without a node (As in figures 191b and 215a)202



202a *First segment of tarsus of hind leg nearly naked and usually cylindrical. Hairs on the thorax simple. Wasps214
202b *First segment of tarsus of hind leg with many hairs; sometimes flattened. Hairs on the thorax plumose. Bees203
203a *Cheeks broad, eyes remote from the base of the mandibles. *Basal joint of the hind tarsus flattened204
203b *Cheeks narrow, eyes approaching the base of the mandibles. *Basal joint of the hind tarsus frequently not much flattened205
204a Eyes bare. *Hind tibiæ with apical spursFamily Bombidæ 204b *Eyes hairy. *Hind tibiæ without apical spursFamily Apidæ
205a *Fore wings with three submarginal cells206 205b *Fore wings with two submarginal cells211
206a Wasp-like bees with bright colors and not much hair. No pollen-collecting apparatusFamily Nomadidæ
206b Not wasp-like in appearance207
207a *Tibia of hind leg shorter than the basal segment of tarsus. Large species resembling bumble beesFamily Xylocopidæ
207b *Tibia of hind leg as long as the basal segment of the tarsus. Medium-sized species208
208a *Labrum conspicuous, about twice as broad as long209 208b *Labrum inconspicuous, several times as broad as long210
209a Small metallic bees, not covered with hairsFamily Ceratinidæ 209b Medium to large size bees. Head and thorax densely pubsecentFamily Anthophoridæ
210a *Tongue short, obtuse at apexFamily Colletidæ 210b Tongue longer, acute at apex (As in figures 203b and 204b)Family Andrenidæ
211a *Face of males densely pubescent. *Females with a dense brush of hairs on the ventral side of the abdomenFamily Megachilidæ
211b *Face bare or nearly bare. Females without a brush of hairs on the ventral side of abdomen212
212a Labrum evident, though sometimes small 213
212b *Labrum concealed by the clypeusFamily Stelidæ
213a Legs clothed with long hairsFamily Panurgidæ 213b Legs bare or clothed with short hairsFamily Hylæidæ (Also called Prosopidæ)



214a *Pronotum not touching the tegulæ (See also figure 186b)	
215a *Petiole long and slenderFamily Sph 215b Abdomen sessile or very short-petioled (As in figures 191a or 224a)	
216a Middle tibia with one apical spur (As in figure 214a)	
217a Labrum concealed by the clypeus (As in figure 218b) Family Nyss 217b *Labrum free, exposed beyond the clypeus Family S	onidæ tizidæ
218a *Labrum free, exposed beyond the clypeusFamily Bemb 218b *Labrum concealed by the clypeus	
219a *Fore wings with two radial cellsFamily Crabre 219b *Fore wings with three or four radial cells	
Abdomen constricted between first and second segments (As in figure 224a)	
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221a *Eyes deeply emarginate. Clypeus not lobedFamily Trypoxy 221b *Eyes not emarginate. *Clypeus with a median lobeFamily Philam	lonidæ
	lonidæ nthidæ 223
221b *Eyes not emarginate. *Clypeus with a median lobeFamily Philameter Philamete	lonidæ nthidæ 223 225 espidæ
221b *Eyes not emarginate. *Clypeus with a median lobeFamily Philanel 222a *With two terminal spurs on middle tibia	lonidæ nthidæ 223 225 espidæ 224 th
221b *Eyes not emarginate. *Clypeus with a median lobeFamily Philanel 222a *With two terminal spurs on middle tibia	lonidæ nthidæ 223 225 espidæ 224 th Males)