

Earwig insect

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Earwig Insects Introduction The earwig insects belong to Dermaptera order. The insects reside in New Zealand, Americas, Australia, Africa and Eurasia. The earwigs comprise 12 families with around 2, 000 species. The unique feature of the earwigs is the cerci, which are forceps pincers pairs located in the abdomen. The earwigs utilize the “ skin wings” order name; because of the membranous wings located under the short forewings (Fisher, 2006).

2. Life Cycle of Earwigs Insects

Earwig insects are hemimetabolous, hence they experience incomplete metamorphosis which develops between 4 and 6 molts series. Development stages connecting the molts are referred to as instars. Earwigs, after hatching, live for an estimated one year. The earwigs begin mating in autumn, and are mostly found together in winter or autumn. During mating, males and females live in soil, debris or crevices. After mating, sperms are capable of being in the female for long duration, months, before fertilization of eggs. Between mid winter and early spring, males leave. Thereafter, females start laying between 20 and 80 pearly white eggs. Parasitic earwigs are viviparous; hence produce live young ones during birth (Fisher, 2005).

3. Structure and Function

The reproductive system of the earwig females comprises; lateral oviducts, genital chamber, ovaries and spermatheca. Sperm is stored in the spermatheca, and the egg leaves the female’s body through lateral ducts. The female opening, referred to as gonopore, is located beneath the seventh abdominal section. Ovaries are primitive; hence, polytrophic (Robinson, 2005).

4. Evolution of Earwig Insects

Fossil documentation of Dermaptera begins during Late Triassic up to Early Jurassic duration approximately 208 million years ago in Australia and also England. The records illustrate around 70 specimens of Archidermaptera, the extinct suborder. Some modern earwig traits illustrated by neonatologists are not found in earliest fossils; however, the adults possessed five segmented tarsi, adequately developed ovipositors, long segmented cerci, and veined tegmina (Fisher, 2006).

5. Additional Interests

The major earwig species are Forficulina. This is divided into nine families comprising 180 genera; for instance *Forficula auricularia*, commonly referred to as the European Earwig. Species represented in Forficulina are not parasites, have functional wings and are free living. They possess unsegmented cerci that resemble huge forceps-like structures (Robinson, 2005).

References

- Fisher, J. (2006). " Earwig in the ear". *Western Journal of Medicine* 145 (2): 245.
- Robinson, H. (2005). *Handbook of urban insects and arachnids*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.