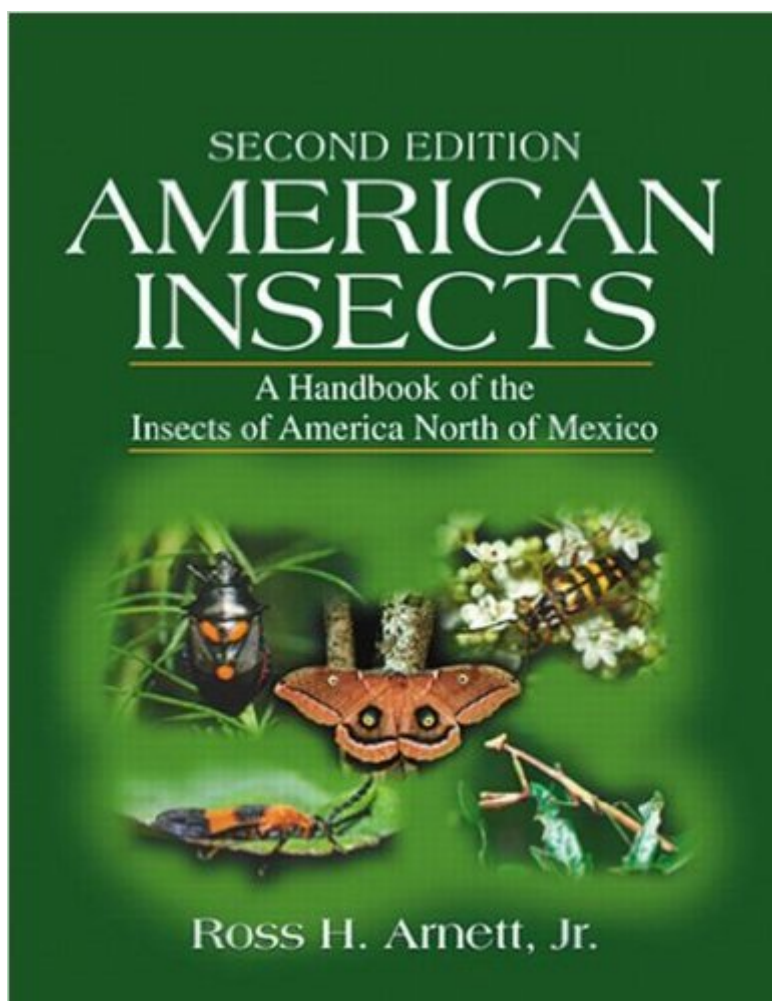


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American Insects: A Handbook Of The Insects Of America North Of Mexico, Second Edition



Synopsis

Offering a complete accounting of the insects of North America, this handbook is an up-dated edition of the first handbook ever compiled in the history of American entomology. By using *American Insects, A Handbook of the Insects of America North of Mexico, Second Edition*, readers can quickly determine the taxonomic position of any species, genus, or higher taxon of insect known to occur in America and Canada. Every order, family, and genus is conveniently numbered and indexed, making this volume the only complete single source for all of the names of orders, families, and genera currently available. This book fills the need for an accurate way to identify, with the several hundred drawings and photos, the common insects of all orders. Now there is a tool available to those working without a major collection and library; and those who would like to have a general knowledge of insect life without becoming overwhelmed by the vast number of minute insect species. This usable guide provides sizes, shapes, color patterns and salient features of some species of each major family by pointing out those groups most likely to be encountered, including all North America pests. What's New in this Edition? Researchers in many orders use the results of cladistics, a new tool for determining the relationship of orders, families, genera, and species of organisms, including plants as well as animals. Specialists have provided lengthy lists of generic changes. Many of the identification keys have been revised by adding more illustrations and making sure all description terms are in the Glossary. The bibliographies of each Order section have been updated to include all important works that have appeared since the original edition.

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Customer Reviews

As a naturalist and amateur entomologist, I found the first edition of this book especially useful for looking up unfamiliar genera and species of insects, to find out where they fit in the scheme of insect taxonomy. Unfortunately, CRC Press, the publisher of the second edition, has cut corners by reducing the size of the index from 128 pages for 714 pages of text in the first edition to 57 pages for 931 pages of text in the second edition. This was accomplished by eliminating all but the major genera from the index. In my opinion, this seriously diminishes the value of the book. The best information in the world is useless if you can't access it efficiently. A book like this lives or dies by the quality of its index. After purchasing the book in early January, 2001 and quickly discovering the problem, I wrote to the publisher to complain and to ask that they make available a complete index as a supplement. I have yet to receive a response from them. The book's author, Ross Arnett, was upset when the publisher of the first edition inadvertently left out the photo captions in proof and wouldn't restore them. I have to think he is spinning in his grave over the gutting of the index in the second edition, a much more serious affair. I'd love to be able to recommend the second edition of this book. However, unless the publisher remedies the index problem, I can't. Unless you want it primarily for the keys, I suggest looking for a used copy of the first edition.

This is a supplement to my earlier review. Note that the description of *American Insects*, by Arnett, ... is based on the first edition, in which "Every order, family, and genus is conveniently numbered and indexed" and you could "quickly determine the taxonomic position of any species, genus, or higher taxon of insect known to occur in America and Canada." This is not the case in the second edition. You can look up major genera only. Subfamilies are listed under an entry for the family, not under the subfamily name, which means you can't quickly determine their taxonomic positions. You have to know the taxonomic position in order to look up the subfamilies. This defeats one major purpose of the book, and renders it not very usable. Whoever provided the text for the book description apparently just carried it over from the previous edition, without taking into account the changes in the new edition. This isn't by a long stretch the same book.

I like this book. It has thousands of listings of insects, a lot of explanatory information regarding classification and historical references. Many ugly old style black and white illustrations. Would have been 5 stars with better photos. But for a bug person in the USA this is the big Kahuna.

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