

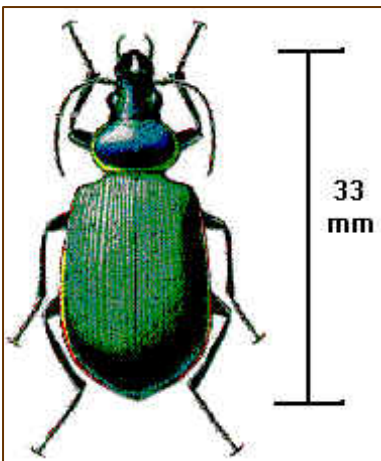


GROUND BEETLES

Ground beetles are but one family in the beetle order *Coleoptera*. This order is large and diverse with more than 300,000 described species. Although capable of biting, they are generally not medically harmful. They occasionally enter homes but cause no damage.

Description

Beetles are easily identified by the thickened and heavily sclerotized front wings called elytra that serve as a protective cover for the membranous hind wings. Most are flattened, dark brown, hard-bodied beetles with many fine lengthwise ridges on their wing covers. One of the most striking ground beetles is the caterpillar hunter; this beetle is about 1 inch long and brilliant metallic green.



Ground beetles tend to travel on the ground, but are able to fly. They are voracious hunters and can run fast. They are mostly black, but some are brightly colored. Some species, when disturbed, can secrete a foul-smelling repellent that causes brief, but intense, pain if it gets into an open

wound. Ground beetles have well-developed mandibles but are not known to bite people.

Location

Ground beetles live under leaves, old logs, and stones. They can be found in moist woods, fields, and gardens. Ground beetles are often found

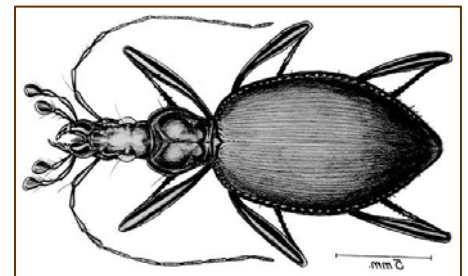
inside buildings in the spring. They may crawl around basements or ground floor rooms or be attracted to bright lights after dusk.

Life Cycle

Female beetles lay eggs in the soil. Eggs hatch into larvae that feed in or on the soil under debris. There may be several generations per year. Winter is spent in the larvae or adult stage. Adults and larvae are beneficial because they feed on other insects.

Monitoring

Monitoring for ground beetles is not generally necessary.



Cultural Methods

Ground beetles are predators and can venture inside in search of prey, especially when populations outside are high. Keeping prey insects out of the school buildings will help discourage ground beetles from coming inside. Seal cracks and weather-strip doors, windows, and other openings to prevent beetles and other insects from entering buildings.

Pesticides

Because ground beetles are considered beneficial insects, no pesticides are recommended. The best control method is to simply catch them in a container and relocate them outside.

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