

BOOK REVIEW

EVANS, A. V. 2014. *BETLES OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A. 560 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-13304-1 (paperback). Price: US\$35.00.

BETLES

of Eastern North America



Arthur V. Evans

Earlier in the summer, I received a wonderful book in the mail. Arthur V. Evans, a most prolific coleopterist, has produced yet another classic. This book entitled *Beetles of Eastern North America* represents a huge effort to document many beetle species with live photographs and engaging descriptions. This substantial book of 560 pages treats all 115 families of beetles in eastern North America. There are over 1,500 photographs included, and these portray 1,409 species. Except for some really rare or inconspicuous species, or members of very speciose genera, the user is very likely to find most specimens they collect in the eastern United States and Canada represented in this book.

There have been other works that treat beetles of eastern North America, but some of them suffer from being very old and nomenclaturally out of date, lacking color photographs, or both (for example, Jacques' (1951) *How to Know the Beetles*; Dillon and Dillon's (1961) *A Manual of Common Beetles of Eastern North America*; Downie and Arnett's (1996) *The Beetles of North-eastern North America*; Arnett *et al.*'s (2000, 2002) *American Beetles*). To be fair, these works focused on identification keys, usually to genera,

whereas Art Evans' book focuses on species representation and recognition. In short, none of these earlier books come close to having the impact that *Beetles of Eastern North America* will have since those works do not bring beetles to life the way Evan's book does. Also, the book makes the information it presents far more accessible to amateur naturalists with an interest in beetles than the earlier, more technical books noted above.

Evans' work begins with detailed sections on the anatomy, development, and behavior of beetles, followed by thoroughly described methods of collection, photography, and specimen preparation. This is followed by the species treatments (usually four to a page) that include a paragraph of text adjacent to a photograph of a live specimen. With few exceptions, these photographs depict the beetles in natural settings, usually on leaves or a woody substrate. A few beetles, by necessity, were photographed on an artificial substrate or had postimaging enhancements. In nearly every case, the specimens are beautifully illuminated and focused such that all dorsal identifying structures are visible. Art Evans himself photographed more than half of the species included in this work, but he also had a team of 90 collaborating photographers who took the other 50%. The species account text includes all the relevant descriptive information one would consult to make an identification, including the length, coloration, structural characteristics, adult and larval host plants, and geographic range of the species.

My struggle to find any weaknesses in this book was almost in vain, and those few objections I levy may seem pedantic; but to be balanced, I mention them here. The two major invasive species in North America, the Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*, Cerambycidae) and the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*, Buprestidae) are mentioned only in the introduction. It would seem appropriate that they each would be fully treated in the species account section, along with the other members of their families, especially considering that most of the other, lesser known species in the introduction have full treatments later in the book. Another quibble is why have the cryptic parenthetical number at the end of each species account? I had to search around quite a bit before I found out what it meant (the number is the number of species of the parent genus east of the Mississippi River). Another minor grievance: I would have

liked to have seen the geographic locality where each photograph was taken (perhaps in the same section with the credits). Sometimes this additional information can help with making identifications in groups of similar-looking species.

In short, I think this book should be on all coleopterist's bookshelves—and for \$35 (or less), there is no reason it shouldn't be on yours! This is not only a great reference for anyone interested in North American Coleoptera, but it would serve

as an excellent textbook or supplementary guide for any course involving collections and identifications and general natural history investigations.

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