

Order DERMAPTERA

Earwigs

Synapomorphies:

- Head prognathous, but without genuine gula
- Ocelli absent
- Forewings (when retained) short elytra, with venation at most faintly indicated
- Hind wings (when retained) with remigium much reduced, melanized; large vannus complexly folded in repose.
- Male without "gonostyli" on segment 9
- Female with subgenital plate formed by enlarged sternum 7; ovipositor vestigial (when at all retained), with only 2 valve pairs.
- Cerci of adults forcipate, without discernable segmentation
- Sperm axoneme with 2 dense sheaths surrounding outer and inner singlets respectively

Diagnosis:

- Somewhat flattened, elongate
- **Short fore wings**, hind wings fold underneath
- **Forceps-like cerci**

Habitat and Habits:

Omnivorous, some tropical species ectoparasitic or predaceous. Some females guard eggs and young in small nests, repel intruders; lick eggs perhaps to prevent fungal growth. *Forficula auricularia* may be a pest of gardens and crops. Several species invade homes and may be nuisances. *Labidura riparia* a predator of lepidopterous pests of agricultural crops.

Collecting and Preserving:

Collect from leaf litter; some fly to lights. Pin or place in alcohol.

Distribution:

1850 species world, mostly tropical
23 species in 6 families in U.S. and Canada, including 5 introduced species

References:

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- Popham, E.J. 1985. The mutual affinities of the major earwig taxa (Insecta, Dermaptera). Z. zool. Syst. EvolForsch. 23: 199-214.

Sakai, S. 1982. A new proposed classification of the Dermaptera with special reference to the check list of Dermaptera of the World. Bull. Daito Bunka University 20: 1-108.

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