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BOOK REVIEW

HERATY J.M. & WOOLLEY J.B. (EDS) 2024: CHALCIDOIDEA OF THE WORLD. CABI, Wallingford, 840 pp. ISBN 978-1-80062-352-1. Price GBP 250.00.

The Chalcidoidea is one of the most species-rich superfamilies of insects. With around 25,000 described species (perhaps representing only ~5% of their true diversity), spanning 50 extant families, they are ubiquitous and ecologically pivotal as parasites of other arthropods. Until now, the sheer scale and complexity of this group meant that no single reference book had adequately covered the entire superfamily on a global scale. *Chalcidoidea of the World* admirably fills this gap. Edited by leading chalcidoid experts John M. Heraty and James B. Woolley, the book is co-authored by dozens of specialists worldwide. This global collaboration of expertise is evident in the comprehensive treatment of each family.

Each of the 50 families of Chalcidoidea is given a detailed chapter covering morphology, diversity, biology and relationships. Importantly, each chapter includes an updated key to genera that is modern, user-friendly and reflects the latest taxonomic revisions. The placement of diagnostic figures directly alongside key couplets greatly enhances usability. Whether depicting wing venation or specific structures, the illustrations appear precisely where needed, streamlining identification and reducing ambiguity. This design feature will be particularly appreciated by those familiar with more traditional keys that have separate plates and text. Another strength of the volume is its accessibility. Morphological terms are clearly explained in the introductory chapter or within family treatments. Readers unfamiliar with chalcidoid morphology will find the terminology approachable and often supported by illustrations. As such, the book serves not only as a reference for specialists, but also as a learning tool for graduate students, biological control practitioners and advanced amateurs.

Beyond identification, the book provides a comprehensive phylogenetic and taxonomic overview. A synthesis of recent phylogenomic and morphological findings provides the basis for the current classification system. Changes to family boundaries and the overall "family tree" of Chalcidoidea are clearly presented and supported by recent literature. Many chapters include newly described genera and updated classifications, ensuring the book remains relevant in this rapidly evolving field.

The production quality is excellent. Despite contributions from multiple authors, the book is well-edited and visually consistent. Numerous high-resolution photographs and diagrams (many in colour) are reproduced with great clarity. The sturdy hardback binding further reinforces the book's suitability as a durable reference for regular use. The price of approximately GBP 250 may limit accessibility for some individuals. However, given the breadth and depth of the content, the integration of identification tools and the authoritative expertise behind it, the price is justified. For institutions, professionals or enthusiastic entomologists, this book is a worthwhile investment that will facilitate accurate identification and deeper engagement with chalcidoid diversity.

In conclusion, *Chalcidoidea of the World* fills a long-standing void in entomological literature. It offers a unified, modern treatment of the entire superfamily, combining clarity, usability and scholarly rigour. This landmark volume is set to become an invaluable resource for anyone studying or working with parasitoid Hymenoptera.

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