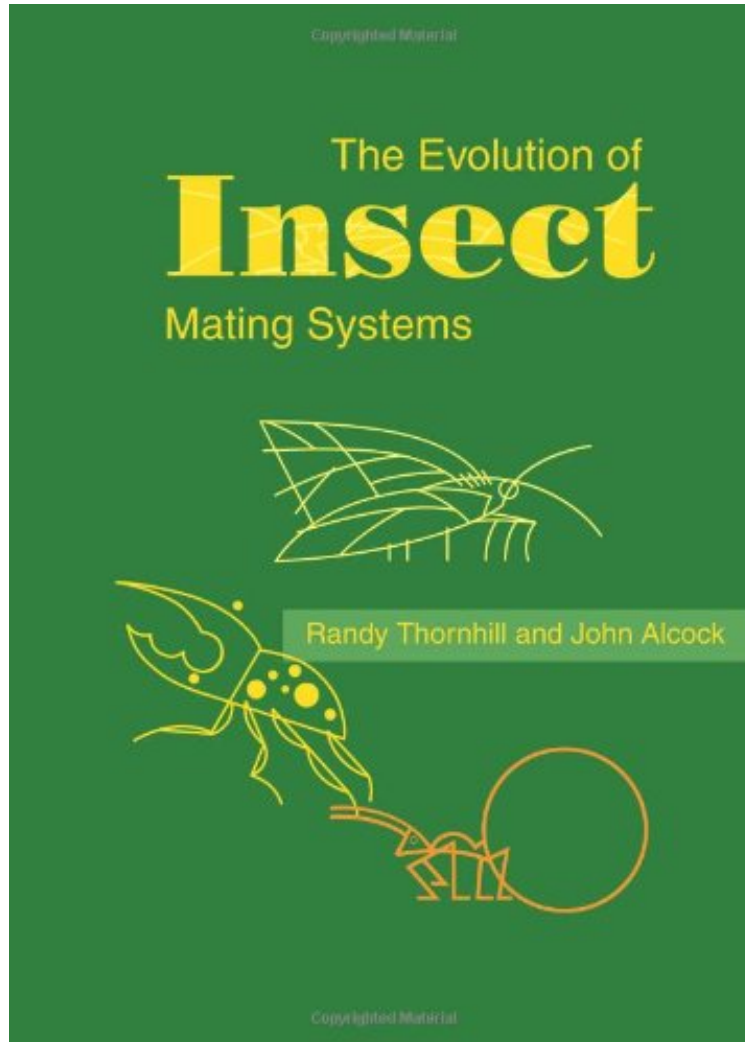


The Evolution of Insect Mating Systems

Randy Thornhill

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



 Download

 Read Online

#4431386 in BooksColor: Green 2000-04-23Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.41 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 1583484205564 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Randy Thornhill : The Evolution of Insect Mating Systems before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Evolution of Insect Mating Systems:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Exquisite Horror of Alien BeautyBy Bill PerezWhen you use your imagination and envision insect evolution as a single, huge and ancient phenomenon--a monstrous morphing blossom endlessly ramifying through an infinite-dimensional phenotype space--you begin to understand it as a fierce and indomitable force of nature. And while many of its freakish aspects are standard fare in biology textbooks and nature documentaries--never failing to cause our vertebrate mandibles to gape in horror--the mating schemes of insects are seldom dwelt upon in presentations to layfolk. While this fat volume is not specifically aimed at the casually interested layperson, it is well within the grasp of the interested non-biologist--and I recommend it highly to anyone

interested in insects or evolution. First, it is a thorough review of the evolutionary issues of insect sex. Unlike many scientific "reviews" which are highly skewed towards the author's own work, this book displays the authors' almost omniscient acquaintance with everyone's contributions to the field. But this book is not a taxonomy--every example of insect mating strategy is presented within an evolutionary context, and used to illustrate or nuance some adaptive principle or tradeoff. And if you thought insect defense, feeding, and social habits were weird--be prepared for an extreme excursion through what insect evolution is capable of--from "traumatic insemination" (where the male, circumventing the female's sperm-sequestering genitalia, rips through her side to deposit directly in her abdomen[!]); to parasitic flies homing in on noisy crickets to spray them with a cloud of slowly lethal maggots (illustrating the costs shouldered by conspicuously advertising males); to grossly immature male fig wasps, emerging extra early to inseminate virgin females before they have even awakened from their brood chambers; to the whimsical surrealism of insect genital morphology. Of course, not everything is nightmarish--there are the beautiful aerial acrobatic contests of territorial male butterflies; the complex game-theoretic calculus of nuptial gifts, the guarding of females, and female mate choice; the almost comical orthopteran [grasshopper/cricket/katydid] Kama Sutra on p. 312 (I need this on a poster or T-shirt!). And to see all this (copiously illustrated, by the way), not as individual wonders held up to amaze, but as part of an illumination of basic evolutionary principles is pure scientific elegance. Awesome.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great book, lousy printingBy Christy L. BillsEverything Bill Perez says is true. This book is a classic in entomology. I couldn't put it down when I read the library copy so I ordered one for myself.BEWARE! The older edition has some great photos. The new 2001 edition is very poorly printed. Many of the photos are inscrutable. The printing is clear but the graphics are quite poor. I was upset to find that, for a very expensive book, I wasn't getting what I had expected.

Here is the first comprehensive analysis of insect reproductive behavior to employ a modern evolutionary perspective. As such it represents a marriage of two disciplines-entomology and modern evolutionary theory-which have recently made great strides, but in partial isolation from each other. By reviewing all of insect reproductive behavior from an evolutionary viewpoint, Thornhill and Alcock make a powerful case for the importance of sexual selection. In doing so they show the riches to be gained from an integration of theory and example. "[The Evolution of Insect Mating Systems] brings to a vertebrate-biased literature a well-documented and persuasive demonstration of the importance of insects for generation and testing of theory . . . organizes an immense and diverse literature on insect reproductive behavior into a logical framework that will allow more efficient and effective exploration of both insect behavior and sexual selection theory. Thornhill and Alcock demonstrate the utility of evolutionary (selectionist) thinking for organizing and explaining diverse and complex patterns of behavior . . . As a result, their books goes well beyond a review and synthesis of tge literature of insect behavior . . . The Evolution of Insect Mating Systems will make its mark as one of the more important contributions to behavioral ecology, evolutionary theory, and entomology."-Science

"...will make its mark as one of the more important contributions to behavioral ecology, evolutionary theory, and entomology." -- Science