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## Book Review of *Insects of Texas: A Practical Guide* by David H. Kattes.

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**Insects of Texas: A Practical Guide.** By David H. Kattes. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009. 215 pp. Photographs, glossary, index. \$27.00 paper.

This guidebook is a well-illustrated, well-bound addition to our growing series on Texas insect fauna. Designed for the beginner and nonspecialist (and suitable for use in schools), it provides an identification aid for recognition of the groups to which common insects belong.

Other references must be used in most cases to determine the species at hand. Today, *BugGuide.Net* will be the next step for the average reader.

Most of the book is devoted to one-page presentations of a small selection of families, usually those that contain species most likely to be found by the casual observer. Common name, group name, pronunciation guide, and characteristics are presented with a brief account of a selection of included insects, for which a generic or occasionally a specific name and two or more good illustrations are usually given. An introduction to insects, arachnids, and other arthropods, although essential, leaves only 154 pages for family presentations, and this is again reduced by a number of tables giving preferred habitat and feeding characteristics for common families of large orders like flies. No estimate is given for the number of insect species thought to occur in Texas, but the world figure given, 2 to 30 million, is suitably large and reflects the number yet to be discovered and described. Altogether but a tiny, tiny fraction of Texas insects is presented in this book. Unlike those lucky botanists, we entomologists have no fat manuals that cover all the insects of the state and therefore depend on consulting museum collections for precise identification.

There is a general introduction to systematic arrangement, with a reference from Genesis (the naming of living creatures) and mention of the roles of Aristotle (classification) and Linnaeus (binomial system of names) in early classification and the hierarchy of higher groups. The simple species definition is based on similar appearance, physiology, genetics, and ecology, but there is no reference to evolution. In this respect the book will be welcome in home school and camp situations where other available Texas insect books might not. “Splitters” and “lumpers” are mentioned to explain the various classification styles encountered in entomology.

Among the book's drawbacks is its confusing mention of different patterns of metamorphosis, given here as ametamorphosis (egg-nymph-adult), incomplete metamorphosis (egg-naiad-adult), gradual metamorphosis (egg-nymph-nymph-adult), and complete metamorphosis (egg-larva-pupa-adult). A butterfly of the genus *Asterocampa* (Nymphalidae) appears in three photographs where it is incorrectly identified as a “satyr” (Satyridae). Nine large illustrations scattered through the volume, along with its cover, unfortunately have no caption.

Because Great Plains habitats occur in the majority of Texas counties and their insects range widely, this book will be of use far beyond the boundaries of the state, from Mexico to Canada. Given the formidable task of select-

ing a few good insects to feature, for the few families that could be included, the author has done a remarkably good job. **Christopher J. Durden**, *Curator Emeritus of Entomology and Geology, Texas Memorial Museum, University of Texas at Austin.*