

# FAMILY: Asilidae (Robber flies)

## DESCRIPTION

The tops of the heads of asilids are hollowed, and their bodies may range from being stout to thin and dainty. Identifying characteristics for the family Asilidae include: medium- to large-sized flies; some species stout-bodied and hairy, others slender and lacking hair, face usually "bearded;" 3 ocelli in depression between the compound eyes, antennae 3-segmented; third segment elongate and often with terminal style.

## HABITAT

The majority of species of Asilidae frequent dry and sandy areas. The number of species which occur deep within woods is limited, and these flies concentrate on the edges of woodlands, where shrubs occur and give way to grassland.

## ECOLOGY

Larvae are found in soil and decaying wood, apparently feeding on other insects. They are sometimes found consuming the eggs and larvae of other insects. The swift flying adults are also predators of other insects, catching their prey as it flies through open scrublands. Males often catch females in midair in order to mate. Females oviposit into sand, soil or vegetation.

## USEFUL TAXONOMIC WORKS

Artigas, J.N. & Papavero, N. (1988): The American genera of Asilidae (Diptera): Keys for identification with an atlas of female spermathecae and other morphological details. I. Key to the subfamilies and subfamily Leptogastrinae. - Gayana. Zoologia. Universidad de Concepcion, Instituto Central de Biologia 52(1-2): 95-114; Concepcion.

Artigas, J.N. & Papavero, N. (1988): The American genera of Asilidae (Diptera): Keys for identification with an atlas of female spermathecae and other morphological details. II. Key to the genera of Dasypogoninae Macquart, with descriptions of new genera and species and new synonymies. - Gayana. Zoologia. Universidad de Concepcion, Instituto Central de Biologia 52(3-4): 199-260; Concepcion.

Artigas, J.N. & Papavero, N. (1991): The American genera of Asilidae (Diptera): Keys for identification with an atlas of female spermathecae and other morphological details. VII.1. Subfamily Stenopogoninae Hull. A preliminary classification into tribes. - Gayana. Zoologia. Universidad de Concepcion, Instituto Central de Biologia 55(2): 139-144; Concepcion.

Artigas, J.N. & Papavero, N. & Pimentel, N.P. (1988): The American genera of Asilidae (Diptera): Keys for identification with an atlas of female spermathecae and other morphological details. IV. Key to the genera of Laphriinae Macquart (except tribe Atomosiini Hermann) with the description of three new.... - Boletim do Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi. Serie Zoologia 4(2): 211-256; Belem.



**DIVERSITY:** 5500 species of Asilidae are known in the world, 1053 species in North America, 1245 in Central and South America.

**RANGE:** Found worldwide

**COLLECTION METHODS:** Netting