



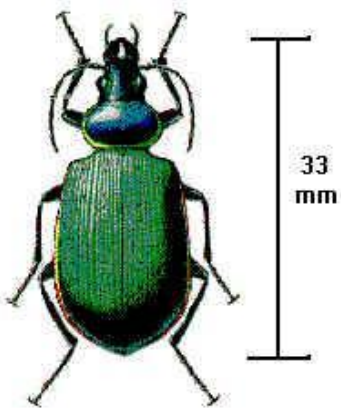
# Oklahoma School IPM

## Ground Beetles



Ground beetles are but one family in the beetle order Coleoptera. This order is very large and diverse with over 300 thousand described species. Although capable of biting, they are generally not medically harmful. They occasionally enter homes but cause no damage.

**Description:** Beetles are easily identified by the thickened and heavily sclerotized front wings called elytra that serve as a protective cover for the



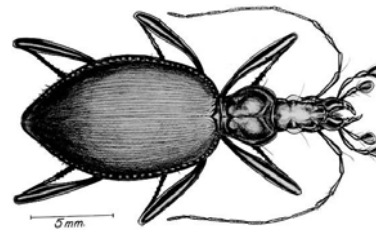
membranous hind wings. Most are flattened, dark brown, hard-bodied beetles with many fine lengthwise ridges on their wing covers. One of the most striking ground beetles is the

**caterpillar hunter**, This beetle is about 1 inch long and brilliant metallic green. Ground beetles tend to travel on the ground, but are able to fly. They are voracious hunters and can run very fast. They are mostly black, however, some are brightly colored. Some species can secrete a foul-smelling repellent when disturbed that causes brief but intense pain if it gets into an open wound. Ground beetles have well developed mandibles, but are not known to bite people.

**Location:** Ground beetles live under leaves,

old logs, and stones. They can be found in moist woods, fields, and gardens. Ground beetles are often found inside buildings in the spring. They may crawl around basements or ground floor rooms or be attracted to bright lights after dusk.

**Life Cycle:** Female beetles lay eggs in the soil. Eggs hatch into larvae that feed in or



on the soil under debris. There may be several generations per year. Winter is spent in the larva

or adult stage. Adults and larvae are beneficial because they feed on other insects

**Monitoring:** Monitoring for ground beetles is not generally required.

**Cultural Methods:** Ground beetles are predators and can venture inside in search of prey especially when populations outside are high. Keeping prey insects out of the school buildings will help discourage ground beetles from coming inside. Seal cracks, weather-strip doors, windows and other openings to prevent beetles and other insects from entering buildings

**Pesticides:** None are recommended because ground beetles are considered beneficial insects.

