

## BEETLE, HARLEQUIN FLOWER



**GEOGRAPHIC RANGE** New World: U.S. (Texas, Louisiana) and Mexico (Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí). It is now also established in Florida.

**HABITAT** Low-elevation and mid-elevation tropical rainforests.

### **CONSERVATION STATUS**

- IUCN: Not Yet Assessed (2014).

### **COOL FACTS**

- Flower scarabs are important pollinators.
- The American tropics and subtropics contain a wealth of the *Gymnetis* species, but the harlequin flower beetle is the only one to occur north of Mexico.
- Scarab beetles are distinguished from other beetles by their unusual antennae, each of which terminates in 3 flattened plates that fit together to form a club.
- Scarab beetles are one of the most popular families with insect collectors because of the large size and beautifully colored, hard, highly polished forewings of many species.
- “Beetle” comes from old English “biten”, meaning “to bite, chew and gnaw”.
- Beetles comprise 40% of all insects and 6X the number of ALL vertebrates.

### **DIET**

- In the wild: Variety of flowers, fruits, pollen and tree sap.
- In captivity:

### **MEDIAN LIFE EXPECTANCY**

- Unknown.

### **ENEMIES - DEFENSE**

- Enemies: Unknown.
- Defense: Unknown.

**MATING - CARE OF THE YOUNG**

- Litter / Clutch: Scarab beetles generally lay their eggs in the ground, in dung or in other decomposing materials including carrion. Larvae feed on plant roots, carrion, or dung. Found in soil or in rotting wood. Grubs (C-shaped larvae) mostly live underground or under debris so are not exposed to sunlight. The grubs have a distinctive head capsule and easy-to-identify legs on the thorax.
- Metamorphosis: like all beetles, scarabs undergo complete metamorphosis with 4 stages of development: egg, larva, pupa and adult.

**SOCIAL INTERACTION**

- Unknown.

**LIFE STYLE**

- Activity Period: diurnal.

**PHYSICAL**

- General Description: strikingly patterned. The upper surface of their stout, compact bodies is covered with a fine, smooth surface layer.
- Color: quite variable, with some individuals almost entirely yellow and others mostly black
- Size: North American species .08” – 2.4”.
- Sensory Organs
  - distinctive, clubbed antennae composed of plated (lamellae) that can be compressed into a ball or fanned out like leaves to sense odors.
  - antennae 10-or 9- segmented
  - last 3-7 antennomeres flattened (lamellate) to form a club that can be expanded or folded
- Arms, Legs and Tarsi
  - front legs: broad and adapted for digging; outer edges often toothed or scalloped to facilitate digging
  - front tibia: widened with outer edges toothed
  - tarsal formula: usually 5-5-5, but front tarsi sometimes absent (0-5-5)
  - the outer edges of their front legs are often toothed or scalloped to facilitate digging

**TAXONOMY**

Phylum	Arthropoda
Class	Insecta
Order	Coleoptera
Family	Scarabaeidae /Cetoniidae
Genus / species	<i>Gymnetis caseyi</i>

Etymology: “gymn” = naked, bare; “ett” = small

**REFERENCES**

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