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Invertebrate of the Month

March 2008



Rhipicera sp
Cicada parasites

Clicking in the tree tops this time of year, cicadas are a great source of food for a very cool beetle from the family Rhipiceridae, sometimes more commonly known as eyelash beetles. The antennae of the males are what is called flabellate, and they are used much like scanning radar dishes. Little is known about the biology of Australian species, but larvae of American species are known as ecto-parasites of juvenile cicadas. The beetle pictured above is 22 mm long and was released near some trees infested with cicadas soon after his photographic session in the lab.