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Invertebrate of the Month

June – July 2008



Melolonthine chafers

The large beetle family of scarabs which contains ancient Egypt's sacred scarab, dung beetles, the pesky lawn beetle, and chafers, includes the subfamily Melolonthinae. In Australia this subfamily is well represented and species range from less than 2 mm to larger than 40 mm. They are usually reddish-brown (but some are black or metallic) and their body form is very consistent so that morphologically there is little visible difference for the untrained eye between species. Larvae are usually root feeders and many adults are defoliators of trees including eucalypts. Above is depicted six species ranging from 4 to 40 mm. The last two pictures are dorsal and ventral views of the same species.