

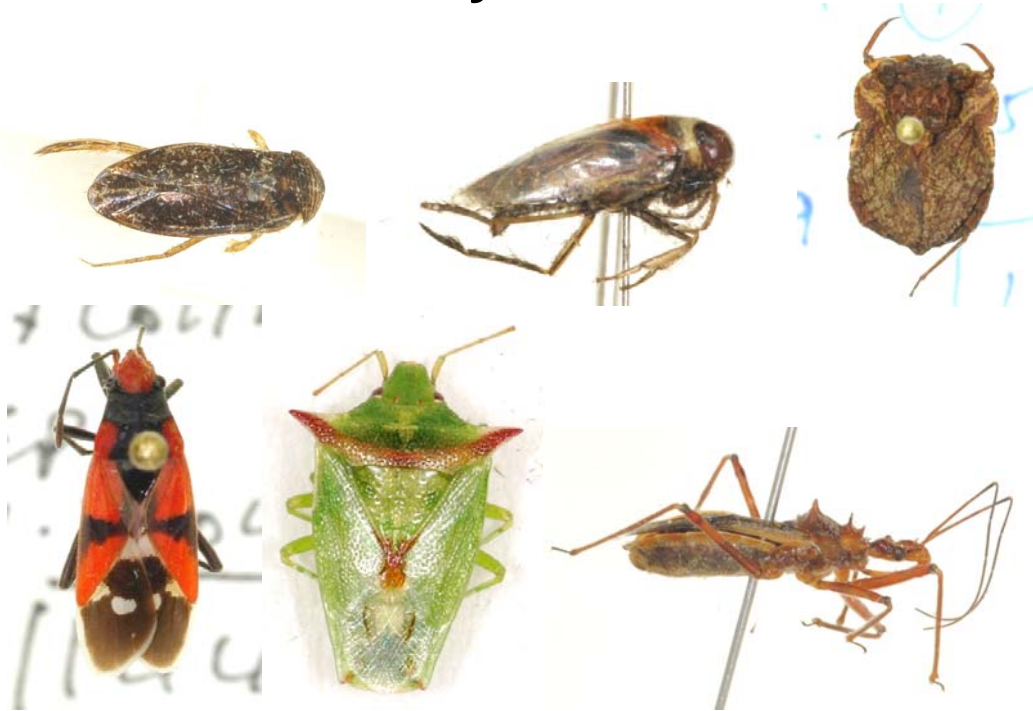
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Invertebrate of the Month

May 2008



Bugs

“Bug” is a term many people mistakenly apply to all insects and in some cases all arthropods (segmented animals with external skeletons), if not all invertebrates. But a true bug is an insect in the order Hemiptera, sub order Heteroptera. These insects are characterized by sucking mouthparts and have a wide range of body forms, from the well known water boatmen (Notonectidae, top left and middle) and curious toad bug (upper right), harlequin (lower left), green pentatomids (lower middle), and voracious predators in the family Reduviidae (lower right). Their food is liquid and ranges from plant sap to insect haemolymph (insect blood) and vertebrate blood, including that of humans. The predatory reduvids are also known to transmit diseases to many mammals. Hemiptera derives from Greek and literally means half wing. So don’t be surprised if you give an entomologist a scorpion or spider and ask them “What’s this bug?” and you get the answer “.... it’s NOT a bug!”