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# The Bee Genera and Subgenera of sub-Saharan Africa

AbcTaxa

Bees (Apoidea: Anthophila) are among the most important of pollinators in natural and agricultural ecosystems worldwide, and with nearly 20,000 described species they are also wonderfully diverse. The African fauna is certainly no exception, with many splendid forms ranging from the giant carpenter bees to the diminutive stingless bees. While the highly eusocial species of honey bees and stingless bees are perhaps the most familiar, the lesser known solitary and cleptoparasitic lineages dominate and enrich the fauna.

During the last 30 years significant efforts have clarified the generic and to some extent specific diversity of bees in Africa. However, the nesting biology and behavior of most African species remains undiscovered or little understood. Similarly, despite the critical role of bees as pollinators, few floral associations have been documented sufficiently and the precise nature of these relationships and their concomitant importance in supporting African biological diversity requires extensive investigation.

The fundamental requirement for advances on the biology of bees in Africa is a means to easily and accurately identify taxa. Hitherto, the principal guide to African bee genera was Arnold's (1947) long-outdated key and summary, a work also thoroughly lacking necessary illustrations. To rectify this situation, Eardley, Kuhmann, and Pauly have prepared a lavishly illustrated, modern reference to the fauna at the generic-subgeneric level. For the first time the full diversity of genera is summarized and each gorgeously reproduced in color, significantly aiding their recognition. This wonderful guide will open the gates to new generations of bee research, improving efforts in documenting diversity, elucidating biologies and ecological associations, establishing conservation practices and policies, and informing the wise development of agriculture throughout Africa.

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Prof. Dr. Michael S. Engel, FLS  
Senior Curator & Professor, Division of Entomology  
University of Kansas Natural History Museum, USA

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