

Rove Beetles

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Rove beetles (Fig. 1) comprise some of the more common beetle species in the yard and garden. They are sometimes found in the house as well. This beetle group represents an extremely large family, the Staphylinidae, which demonstrate a wide diversity of life styles.

While they come in a wide variety of shapes or forms, the more commonly encountered ones are elongate, usually ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to nearly one inch in length. Rove Beetles are often shiny, dark colored, and many are borderline "hairy" in appearance. Most species possess short, squarish wing covers, allowing for exposure of much of the abdomen. The mouthparts, namely the mandibles, are prominent and well fitted for predacious activities. The rove beetles exhibit a very noticeable behavior (likely defensive) when they are disturbed, which can be described as scorpion-like inasmuch as they stick their abdomens up in the air much like the scorpion does when prepares to strike.

Rove beetles can be found under stones, in flowers, in fungi, and in decaying vegetation. Some species are associated with carrion where they may feed on other insects or decaying flesh. Some are associated with ant or termite colonies, while some are even parasitic on other insects. The rove beetles are generally considered beneficial.



Fig. 1. An adult rove beetle. By A.L. Antonelli.