Evolution of Behavioural and Ecological Diversity: Australian *Acacia* Thrips as Model Organisms

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with Botanical Annexe

Classification and Phylogeny of *Acacia*

Bruce R. Maslin

- This book presents a novel, 'model clades' approach to the study of biodiversification, explicitly integrating behaviour, ecology, taxonomy, phylogenetics, and evolution.
- The subjects comprise a single lineage of phytophagous thrips that has radiated on Australian *Acacia*, yielding over 250 species in 30 genera, of which 140 species and nine genera are newly described.
- This radiation has generated four ecological suites of species: gall-inducers (some with defensive 'soldier' castes); species that glue phyllodes together; parasites of these two types of domicile-formers; opportunistic species using old domiciles or other microhabitats.
- The causes and consequences are explored of this behavioural-ecological diversification, with special emphasis on how this study has provided insights into the evolution of social behaviour, of host-plant use, and of exploitative behaviours.
- The driving force behind the system is the arid and unpredictable Australian climate, which has selected for diverse means of creating, usurping, and co-opting domiciles. These ecological pressures have generated a positive feedback mechanism, such that adoption and modification of new host-plants by some thrips species creates further niches for additional ones.
- The remarkable morphological, behavioural and ecological variation represented by these thrips means that they can be considered as a microcosm for understanding the processes that generate biodiversity among all phytophagous insects, and indeed among all animals.

**Hardback:**
vi + 328 pages; 8 colour (27 figures); 420 black/white photomicrographs; indexes to subjects, plants and insects.

**Publishers:**
Australian Biological Resources Study & Australian National Insect Collection, CSIRO, Canberra, Australia.

**Price:**
AU$55.00 includes surface postage for overseas orders, and GST and postage within Australia

**Order online:**