

Dung Beetle



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GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

DUNG BEETLE

FAMILY: Scarabeidae

ORDER: Coleoptera

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ 1/4 - 2 3/8 inches long
- ◆ stout beetles with large heads; vary
- ◆ brown or colorful depending on species
- ◆ piercing and sucking mouthparts in a “beak” at the front of the head



Where to Look:

Look on the ground or in the leaf litter. Of course, the best place you can look is in fresh dung!

Who Eats It?

Dung beetles are eaten by birds and predatory beetles.



LIFE CYCLE

COMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS

The male and female roll a ball of dung. Then they build a tunnel and roll the ball inside. A single egg is laid on the dung ball and then it is covered with soil. The larva feeds on the dung and pupates in the soil.

What It Eats.

Dung beetles eat dung. The world would be a different place without dung beetles and other organisms that break down animal feces and return the nutrients to the soil. Some species also feed on carrion or decaying plants.

Role in the Ecosystem

Dung beetles play an important role in the recycling of nutrients. In parts of Texas dung beetles remove up to 80% of cattle droppings.



Did You Know

The sacred scarab beetles of Egypt were dung beetles and were associated with rebirth. Replicas as well as live beetles were buried with mummies in the ancient tombs of Egypt.