

# The Keys

This book is divided into a series of individual annotated keys: the first two for family-level identifications, and then the subsequent keys for genus-level identifications. These are binary keys, in which each couplet gives two possible outcomes, and the user chooses one path based on the character states listed in the descriptions for each. As each key is a process of elimination, characters are not necessarily unique to the groups for which they are useful in individual couplets. For example, a character that separates two genera from one another in couplet 7 is not necessarily useful for separating out the same genus from all the previous genera. Rather it is useful in couplet 7 because any other genera that may share the character have already been eliminated in earlier couplets using other characters.

**Each couplet in the keys appears in the following format:**

Which key      Couplet number      Number of the couplet that leads to the present couplet

**Halictidae – Couplet 3 (2)**

- ❖ Metanotum with protrusion in the middle; black hairless patches resembling a goat footprint on mesosoma; patches of orange hair on head, mesosoma, and metasoma
- ❖ Metanotum without protrusion in the middle; no black hairless patches resembling a goat footprint on mesosoma; orange hair patches not present on all body parts

... *Mellitidia*

... 4

Proceed on to this couplet

A determination has been reached. See the associated box on the page for more information. Also search this genus in the other resources listed on **page 108**.