

TROPHIC GROUPS OF LEPIDOPTERA CATERPILLARS — AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Summary

Information about all trophic groups of Lepidoptera caterpillars is presented with remarks concerning their biochemical, behavioral and morphological adaptations. Theories on early evolution of caterpillar feeding habits, with soil detritophagy as an ancestral feeding mode, are discussed. All groups of phytophagous caterpillars including: leaf miners, borers, tunnelers and external foliovores with information on possible evolutionary scenarios on transi-

tion to plant feeding, leaf mining and external phytophagy are characterized. Problems of plant-lepidoptera chemical coevolution, sequestration of defensive substances from plants and induction of food preferences are considered. The paper reviews also cases of aphytophagy including detritivory, mycetophagy, coprophagy and carnivory with examples of scavengers, predators parasites and parasitoids.