

## Arthropod Camouflage at the Butterfly Pavilion

Camouflage or crypsis is an adaptation to allow animals to be effectively hidden from view. Many species closely resemble leaves, twigs, rocks, sand, etc. either to escape predators or to ambush prey. Camouflage is often accompanied by modified behaviors such as immobility when approached; rocking to and fro to appear like a breeze is moving them, flattening out, etc.

**McCleay's Specter** – *Extatasoma tiatarum* This spectacular insect comes from the Brisbane area of Australia. In nature the species feeds on Eucalyptus but can be reared on blackberry, rose, oak, etc. Like many species the males are smaller and fully winged (the hindwings being a lovely pink with brown mottling) to disperse in search of females. Females are larger and have non-functional wings and hang upside-down with their abdomen curled like a scorpion. There are numerous small spines covering the body, which deter predators and can be used defensively when the animal is bothered.



**Jungle Nymph** – *Heteropteryx dilatata* A truly spectacular species originating from West Malaysia and one of the bulkiest insects in existence. The heavy apple-green females can reach 160mm and are brachypterous (short-winged) while the brown, thin males are fully winged. Their aggressive displays are very effective and the species is quite capable of drawing blood using the hind legs. Jungle nymphs are fond of guava foliage but will feed on numerous other tree and shrub species.



**Leaf Insect** – *Phyllium bioculatum* Leaf insects occur mainly in the Indo-Australian region and differ from most stick insects in having their forewings (useless for flight) elaborated into a leaf-like shape, complete with veins. The legs may also bear leaf-like expansions. All phasmids are predominately vegetarian and live mostly in dense shrubbery, where they remain immobile during much of the day. In some species males are rare or entirely absent and, as a result, reproduction is parthenogenetic



**Dead-leaf Mantis** – *Deroplatys* sp. These mantids are perfectly camouflaged on the forest floor of the rainforest habitat they inhabit in Southeast Asia. The pronotum and forewings are expanded to look like a chewed up dead leaf. Like many mantises, *Deroplatys* sway to and fro to enhance their camouflage. When startled, dead-leaf mantises perform a spectacular display of flash coloration. The wings open and rise to expose a brilliant orange, black and white pattern and the forelegs are posed to grasp at the would-be predator. Males are three times smaller than the female with fully functional wings. Females can lay three or more oothecae (egg cases) in their lifetime on twigs and branches and the species often does not live for more than a year. Prey includes roaches, crickets, beetles, etc.



**Sri Lankan Ornamental Tarantula** – *Poecilotheria fasciata*

This species comes from the island of Sri Lanka. First described in 1804, this handsome species is arboreal and lives in hollow branches and among clumps of foliage in moist forests. Their mottled coloration helps them hide in the branches. They are fond of crickets, moths and small mice.

