

DICTYOPTERA – MANTIDAE

DICTYOPTERA

- Synonyms : Oothecaria, Blattiformia
- Etymology : Dictyon - net work; ptera - wings
- Common names : Cockroaches and preying mantids.

Characters

- ✓ Head is hypognathous.
- ✓ Antenna is filiform.
- ✓ Mouthparts are chewing type.
- ✓ Tarsus is five segmented.
- ✓ Forewings are more or less thickened, leathery with a marginal costal vein. They are called tegmina.
- ✓ Hindwings are large, membranous and folded fanlike and kept beneath the forewings.
- ✓ Cerci are short and many segmented.
- ✓ Eggs are contained in an ootheca.

Classification

Dictyoptera is divided into two suborders viz., **Blattaria** (cockroaches) and **Mantodea** (preying mantids). There are two important families viz., **Blattidae** and **Mantidae**

	Blattidae	Mantidae
1.	Head is not mobile in all directions	Head is mobile in all directions
2.	Head is hidden by the pronotum	Pronotum does not cover the head
3.	Two fenestrae (degenerated ocelli sensitive to light) occur in the place of ocelli	Three ocelli are present
4.	Pronotum is shield like	Pronotum is elongate

5.	Legs are cursorial and are adapted for running	Forelegs are raptorial middle and hindlegs suited for walking
6.	Gizzard is powerfully armed with chitinous teeth to grind food	Chitinous teeth are absent in gizzard
7.	Female does not devour the male during mating	Often (but not always) devours the male during mating
8.	Eggs are laid inside a chitinous ootheca	Eggs are enclosed in filled solidified foam Ootheca is not chitinous.
9.	Nymphs are not cannibalistic	Nymphs are cannibalistic
10	No mimicry is found	Mimic leaves and flowers
11.	Omnivorous	Carnivorous
12.	Found in household, dead wood, litter etc.	Found mostly outdoors
13.	Economic importance: They feed on food stuff, clothes and paper. They impart a foul smell to the food by contaminating with excreta. Hence they are harmful.	Economic importance: They are predators on moths, flies, grasshoppers, caterpillars, etc. Hence they are beneficial.
14.	Important species: American cockroach <i>Periplaneta americana</i>	Important species: <i>Mantis religiosa</i>
		

