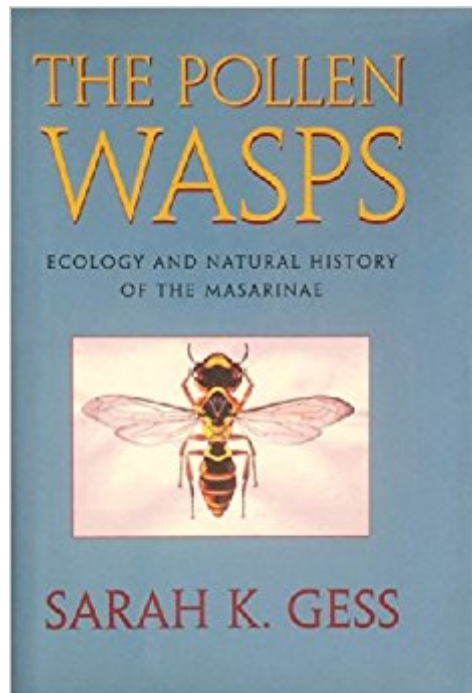




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# **The Pollen Wasps: Ecology And Natural History Of The Masarinae**



## Synopsis

The 25 color plates and 60 black-and-white illustrations offer readers a rare close look at this little-known and endangered group of insects. Three appendixes list all known flower-visiting records, all hymenopteran visitors to the flowers included in the pollination chapter, and all published species names for Masarinae. Pollen wasps are of interest to a wide range of scholars (including entomologists, ethologists, ecologists, and evolutionary biologists) because of their close associations with flowering plants and because of the ability of certain species to produce silk for nest building--an intriguing case of convergent evolution. For these readers, and for students of natural history and proponents of species preservation, *The Pollen Wasps* will prove an invaluable resource.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sarah Gess, in compiling 'The Pollen Wasps' set herself the ambitious task of producing a publication that is easily readable, highly scientific, containing much new information, and a review of the group worldwide...This book contains a wealth of information and is an outstanding contribution to the world of scientific literature. It is neatly presented and well illustrated...For its scientific content, this book is highly recommended for scientists interested in pollination biology, ecology and conservation in arid and semiarid areas, and in aculeate Hymenoptera. This book offers an opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of these intriguing wasps. I found the book stimulating and hope it will inspire others to develop an interest in the little animals to

which the author has dedicated much of her life. (C. D. Eardley *African Entomology*)[A] comprehensive study of a unique and fascinating subfamily of insects which will be of interest to ethologists, ecologists, and natural historians generally...The book is copiously illustrated by clear line drawings, maps, black and white and SEM photographs, as well as by beautiful colour photographs of the Karoo scenery and its flowers, and of pollen wasps visiting them. (J. L. Cloudsley-Thompson *Journal of Arid Environments*)Gess has brought under one cover, from diverse and sometimes obscure sources, just about everything known of the natural history of the masarines, including many unpublished findings. The book covers systematics, biogeography, life cycles, nesting behavior, enemies and associates, and flower associations, and is liberally referenced...This book is recommended for institutional libraries, for hymenopterists, for those interested in pollination and plant-insect interaction, and for those who marvel at the organic diversity of this planet and worry for its preservation. (V. J. Tepedino and P. F. Torchio *Quarterly Review of Biology*)Dr. Gees has produced a very interesting study, rich in information and questions. I cannot do justice to the gems of information scattered throughout, nor the excellent summary of the present state of our knowledge on this group. This work should serve as the basis for many future studies. Evolutionary questions on sociality and nest construction; studies on distribution and insect-plant associations; and biogeographic experiments comes to mind. At the very least it should provide some ideas for investigations on the small-scale effects of land management policies. (Eugène Marais *Cimbebasia*)

This study brings together scattered information from many sources on a unique and fascinating group of insects that is little known to non-specialists. It will make a major contribution to comparative ethology and to ecology and will be of interest to many biologists. Sarah Gess has spent countless days in the field, and her accomplishments are almost beyond belief. This book will be read eagerly by a wide spectrum of biologists. This is one of the finest and most uniformly interesting studies of its kind that I have read in 40 years in academia. (Howard E. Evans, Colorado State University (Emeritus), and author of *Comparative Ethology and Natural History of Sand Wasps*)

This book is terrible in terms of both readability and organization. The previous reviewer claims that one needs to be a professional entomologist to appreciate this book. I am currently getting my PhD in entomology and I certainly did not appreciate it. The biggest flaw of this book is its complete lack of organization. The author is extremely fond of lists. She compiles lists of the species, their

distributions, their nesting habits, etc. In many places, it reads like the catalogue of ships in Homer's Illiad. Almost no effort is made to present this information in any sort of broader context. I've read a number of similar books on wasps and this one takes the cake as the worst of the worst. It is dry and incomprehensible and frankly a waste of my time. If you are looking up the available information on a specific species or genus of pollen wasps, this could be helpful. Otherwise, avoid it like the plague.

Don't get me wrong. I'm sure "The Pollen Wasps" is a very good book...for professional entomologists. However, for a general reader like myself, it was boring, technical and occasionally incomprehensible. This, then, is a book for the scientific research library. If you want to know what species of pollen wasp visits the flowery plant *Wahlenbergia annularis*, or what species of Mutillidae are larval ectoparasitoids on which pollen wasps, or are dying to find out about the exact cladistic relationship of Masarinae within Vespoidea, then this is the book for you. If not... Although the book covers the entire subfamily of pollen wasps, there is an obvious bias towards South Africa, where the author has carried out years of research on these insects. Weirdly, a few species of pollen wasps in the Southwestern Cape are actually threatened by extinction. In a way, it's a real pity that this book isn't more popularized. The very idea of a vegetarian wasp feels inherently appealing. Most wasps, after all, are predators. Pollen wasps, by contrast, provision their larvae with pollen and nectar. But yes, they do sting! Perhaps Sarah Gess could write a more popular book on this subject in the future? I'm sure pollen wasps don't need to be boring...

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