



Texas Forest Service



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caterpillar hunter beetle
***Calosoma sycophanta* (Linnaeus)**

Caterpillar hunter beetles are ground beetles in the family Carabidae. Most ground beetles are beneficial predators, feeding as both larvae and adults on other species of insects. Among the largest of the ground beetles are the caterpillar hunters.

Calosoma sycophanta was imported from Europe as a natural predator of gypsy moth in 1906, and is now established throughout the northeast and in many of the mid-Atlantic states. While the beetle can feed on many species of caterpillars, it is most abundant during gypsy moth outbreaks. An adult beetle may eat several hundred caterpillars during its life span of two to four years, but it reproduces only when caterpillar populations are high. Females lay eggs in the soil. In early summer, larvae hatch and move about actively feeding during the day and night on gypsy moth pupae and mature larvae, perhaps consuming as many as 50 prey during their two weeks of development.

Beetles are large (25 to 35 mm in length) and bright, metallic green with a reddish or brassy cast to the wing covers and a dark bluish-purple prothorax (area just behind the head). Adults actively climb trees as they hunt prey.

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