

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: Maggie Heumann, UNL

Common Name: Braconid Wasp

Scientific Name: *Apanteles spp*, *Microplitis spp....*

Order and Family: Hymenoptera: Braconidae

Size and Appearance: Tiny and brownish/black in color, braconids look like small ichneumon wasps. They have threadlike antennae with 16 or more segments. The first abdominal segment is not prolonged as in most wasps. The wing contains “unfused” or open-ended veins and there is a black stigma (a spot that is filled-in on an enclosed wing cell) on the front wing margin. Females can have long, thread-like ovipositors. This wasp family is highly diverse.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	>1mm; hardly visible to the naked eye	Typically laid inside of the host species; microscopic
Larva/Nymph	>2mm	Extremely small and maggot-like
Adult	2-15mm	Small brown/black wasp with threadlike antennae with 16 or more segments; wings with unfused veins and a black stigma; females can have very long ovipositors
Pupa (if applicable)	< 15mm	Silken cocoon

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Larva have chewing mouthparts; adults have lapping/sponging mouthparts

Host/s: Hornworm caterpillars, gypsy moths, and many other lepidopteran species as well as almost all other orders including their own. They can specialize or generalize and utilize all life stages of their host.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.): Parasitoid- adult female lays eggs inside of host; larva hatch and eat the host before typically spinning a cocoon on the outer remains.

References:

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