

Special Issue

Epigenetics in Insects—Series II

Message from the Guest Editors

In the 1950s, Conrad Waddington was put on the trail of epigenetics by the observation that thoracic appendages in fruit flies could be modified by changing developmental temperature or treating embryos with ether. Since then, the topic of epigenetics has gained significant prominence, and it is therefore only natural to devote a Special Issue to it in *Insects*. Epigenetics has more recently been defined as the study of mitotically and/or meiotically heritable changes in gene function that cannot be explained by changes in DNA sequence (Riggs et al., 1996). Many epigenetic mechanisms have been discovered and studied in detail in the fruitfly *Drosophila melanogaster*, in which they play crucial roles in the structural organization of chromosomes, in gene regulation during development, and in the control of transposable elements. However, epigenetics is also a very active field of research in other insect species. Indeed, phenotype plasticity in response to environmental changes is incredibly common in insects and frequently involves epigenetic mechanisms. This Special Issue will report recent discoveries illustrating the major role of epigenetics in a range of insects.

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Deadline for manuscript submissions

closed (15 July 2023)



Insects

an Open Access Journal
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Impact Factor 2.9
CiteScore 5.6
Indexed in PubMed



mdpi.com/si/157124

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