

THE GELECHIOID FAMILIES

The gelechioid group, encompassing all the families from Oecophoridae to Scythrididae (see pp. 64–90), is distinguished by having sharp-pointed, upturned and sickle-shaped palpi (see the illustration on page 36). Some other families have similar upturned palpi but usually they are less sharp-pointed and a very few gelechioids have different palpi. The base of the proboscis has scales on it, which are visible only under a microscope. The pupal shell is not extruded from the cocoon when the moth emerges. The gelechioid families are very difficult to distinguish and the family classification is very unstable and controversial. There are three species-rich families in Australia: the Oecophoridae, Cosmopterigidae and Gelechiidae. A large proportion of the small moths seen at light belong to these families.