

# Thai Forest Scorpion (Heterometrus)



Scientific classificationEdit this classification	
Domain:	Eukaryota
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Arthropoda
Subphylum:	Chelicerata
Class:	Arachnida
Order:	Scorpiones
Family:	Scorpionidae
Genus:	Heterometrus Ehrenberg, 1828

**Heterometrus**, whose members are also known by the collective vernacular name **giant forest scorpions**, is a genus of scorpions belonging to the family Scorpionidae. It is distributed widely across tropical and subtropical southeastern Asia, including Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, India (Nicobar Islands, Andaman Islands), and China (Hainan).<sup>[2][3]</sup> It is notable for containing some of the largest living species of scorpions.

## Taxonomy

The genus was introduced by [C.G. Ehrenberg](#) (in Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1828), originally as a [subgenus](#) of the genus [Buthus](#).<sup>[4]</sup> It was elevated to genus rank by [F. Karsch](#) in 1879.<sup>[1]</sup> H.W.C. Couzijn (1978, 1981)<sup>[5][6]</sup> subdivided the genus into several [subgenera](#), but F. Kovařík (2004)<sup>[2]</sup> [synonymized](#) these subgenera with the nominal genus. In 2020 the genus was reviewed by L. Prendini & S. F. Loria, three of the former subgenera were revalidated and elevated to genera and one valid subgenus was elevated to genus rank, species were transferred to appropriate genera, resulting in 28 new combinations.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Diversity

The content of this genus may vary, depending on the authority. Eight species are known, many of which are quite similar in appearance:<sup>[7]</sup>

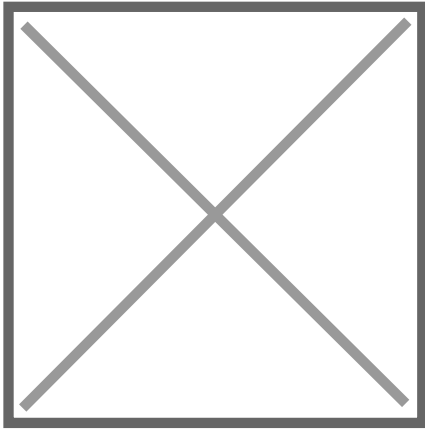
- [Heterometrus glaucus](#) (Thorell, 1876)
- [Heterometrus laevigatus](#) (Thorell, 1876)
- [Heterometrus laoticus](#) Couzijn, 1981
- [Heterometrus longimanus](#) (Herbst, 1800)
- [Heterometrus petersii](#) (Thorell, 1876)
- [Heterometrus silenus](#) (Simon, 1884)
- [Heterometrus spinifer](#) (Ehrenberg, 1828)
- [Heterometrus thorellii](#) (Pocock, 1897)

## General characteristics

Members of *Heterometrus* are generally large-sized [scorpions](#) (100–200 mm or about 4-8 [in](#) total length). Coloration is dark in most species, often uniformly brown or black, sometimes with a greenish shine, with brighter-colored [telson](#), walking legs, and/or [pedipalp](#) pincers in some species. The scorpions are heavily built with especially powerful and globose pedipalp pincers, broad [mesosomal tergites](#) and a proportionally slender and thin [metasoma](#). The telson is proportionally small and the stinger is often shorter than the vesicle. The [cephalothorax](#) and mesosoma are largely devoid of carinae and granulation and the median eyes are situated in a small, lenticular depression on the cephalothorax. Some species are parthenogenic.<sup>[2][6]</sup>

Orthobothriotaxy type C. Pedipalp femur with three trichobothria and pedipalp patella consists with 19 trichobothria. Pedipalp chela with 26 trichobothria. Retrolateral pedal spurs are absent. Stridulatory organ is located on the opposing surfaces of pedipalp coxa and first leg.<sup>[8]</sup>

# Toxicity[\[edit\]](#)



*Heterometrus laoticus* at [Khao Yai National Park](#), [Thailand](#)

As in other genera of the Scorpionidae, the symptoms from *Heterometrus* envenomations are rather mild and no human fatalities are known.<sup>[6]</sup> The sting causes local pain, [inflammation](#), [oedema](#), swelling, and redness of the skin, lasting for hours to a few days. Plant extracts known in the traditional Thai medicine as natural scorpion venom antidotes are effective as symptomatic treatment of *H. laoticus* stings.<sup>[9]</sup> The [protein heteroscorpine-1](#) was found the major component of the venom in *H. laoticus*.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Habitat for the scorpion

Species of *Heterometrus* live in vegetated, often forested, [humid](#) regions with [subtropical](#) to [tropical climates](#). As most scorpions, they are predominantly [nocturnal](#) and hide in [burrows](#), below logs, and in [leaf litter](#).

## In captivity

Due to their impressive size, low toxicity, and docile behavior, species of *Heterometrus* are popular pet scorpions. Unlike many other scorpions, they can be kept in pairs or small groups.

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