

Observing an Oribatid mite



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You have found a mite!

Use this guide to help you observe it. Oribatid mites are dark in colour, under bright light they will appear brown or red.

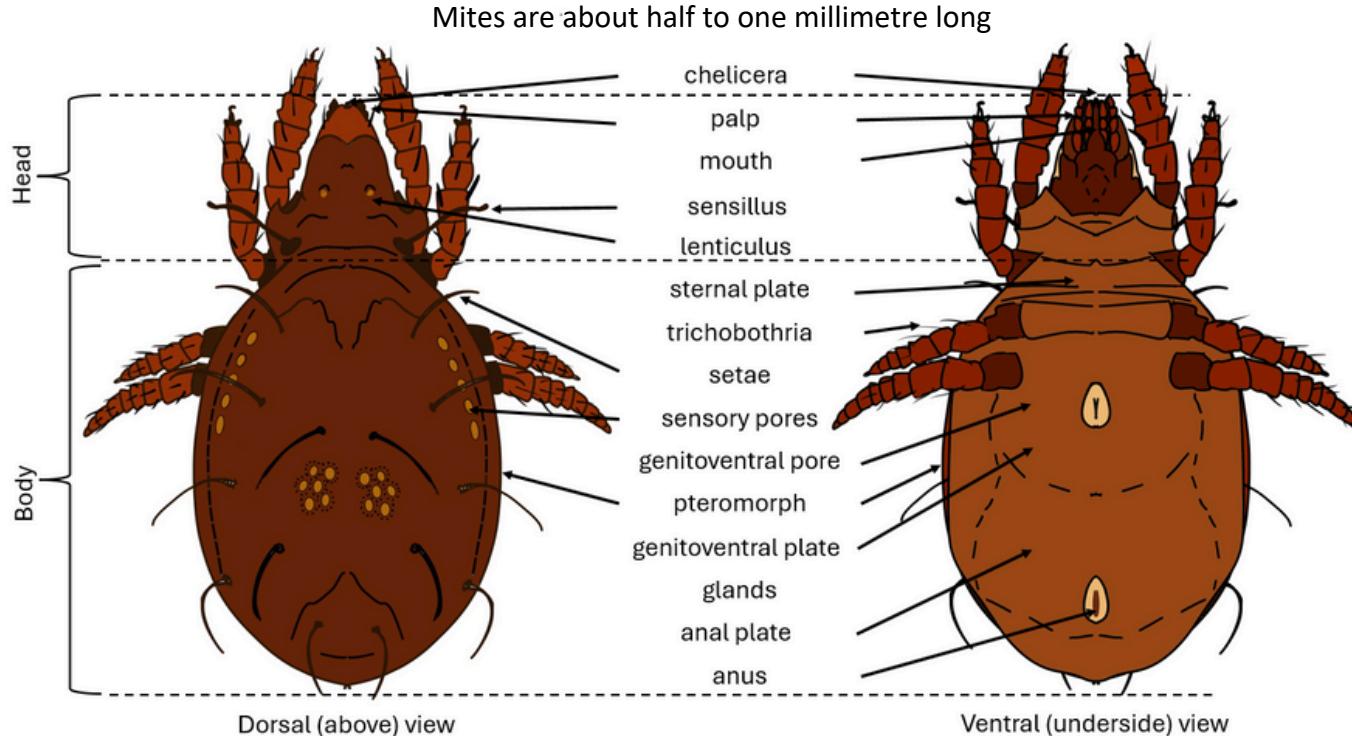
What to look for at x40

- Work out the orientation: above, underside or side view?
- Observe the thick hairs (setae) and thin hairs (trichobothria). The mites use these to sense the environment. Note their position on the body
- Note the distinct parts of the body including the three body plates .

What to look for at x100

- If you can see the underside, look for two pores in the exoskeleton.
- Focus on the texture of the exoskeleton. Look for striations and dimples in the surface.
- Closely observe the relative lengths of the mouth parts: chelicera and palps.

Key word for further research: Acaridae



Behaviour

Mites use hooks on the end to crawl through the moss. They use the lenticulus to detect light and move away from it. Stationary mites may be in a thanatotactic state - acting and smelling dead.

Find out more

www.mosssafari.com
A.Chandler-Grevatt (2025) *Moss Safari. Exploring the secret life in moss*. Pelagic Publishing

