



*insects*



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## Epigenetics in Insects

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### Message from the Guest Editors

Dear Colleagues,

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. It is therefore only natural to devote a Special Issue to Epigenetics in *Insects*. Epigenetics has been more recently 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 very usual 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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# Special Issue