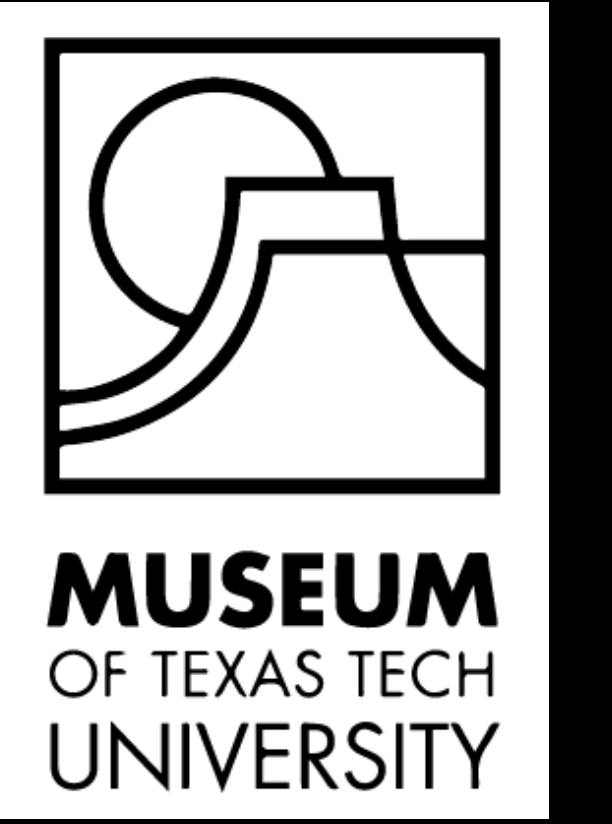




# Curating and Digitizing the Leaf Beetles (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) of the Invertebrate Zoology Collection of the Museum of Texas Tech University



**Shelby Hernandez**  
Plant and Soil Science Department

## Background

Leaf beetles are one of the most diverse and common groups of beetles in the world. Leaf beetles feed on plants. Some species are considered economically important, and others are of conservation concern.

The Museum of Texas Tech University holds:

- About 4.6 million invertebrate specimens
- 10,000 individual leaf beetles representing 575 species

All specimens of leaf beetles in the Invertebrate Zoology Collection range across the United States and South America.

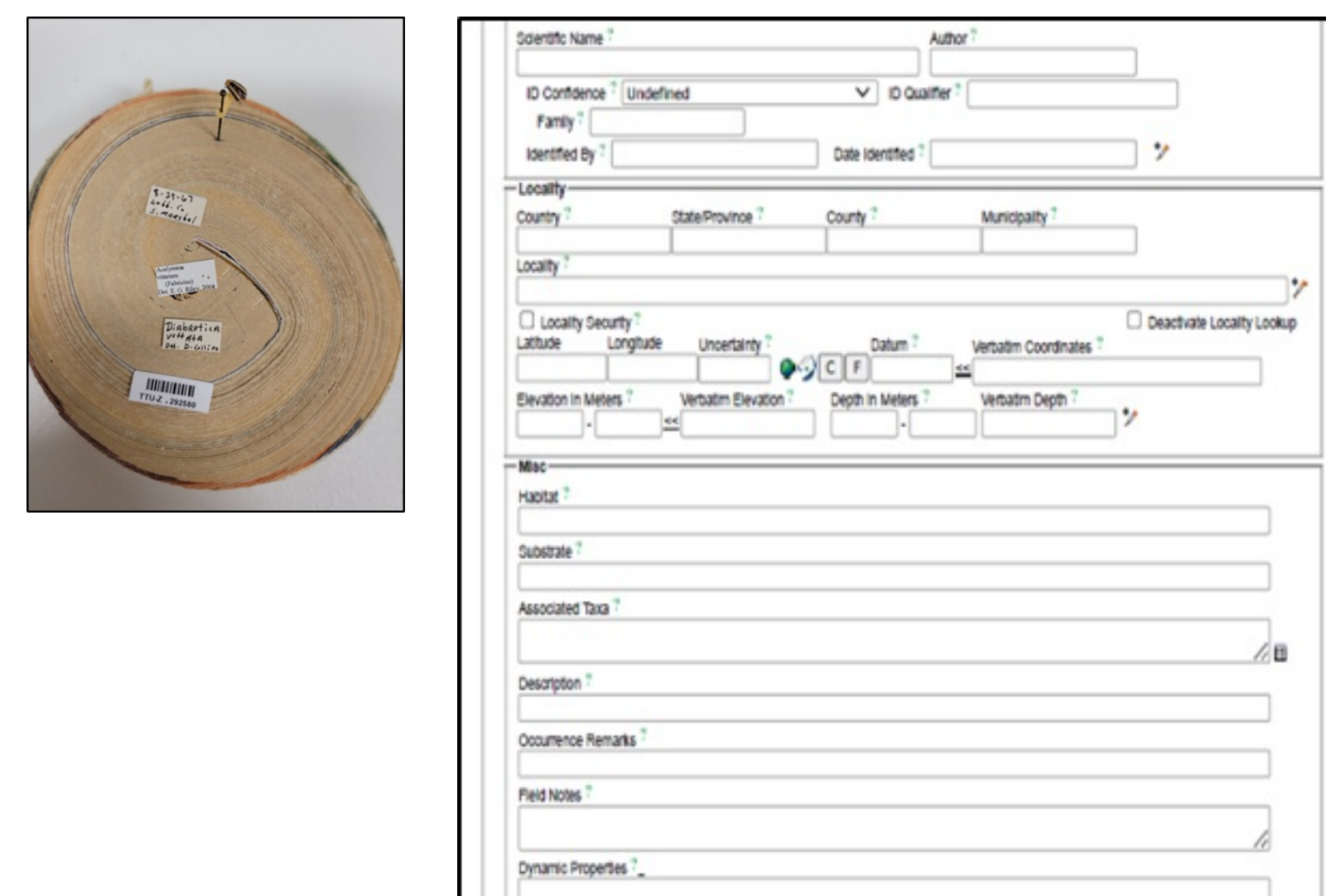
At least 20 plant species have been noted as forms of habitat or food for some of these specimens.



Replace old unit trays



Sort species in alphabetical order



Record label information into specialized database [SCAN]



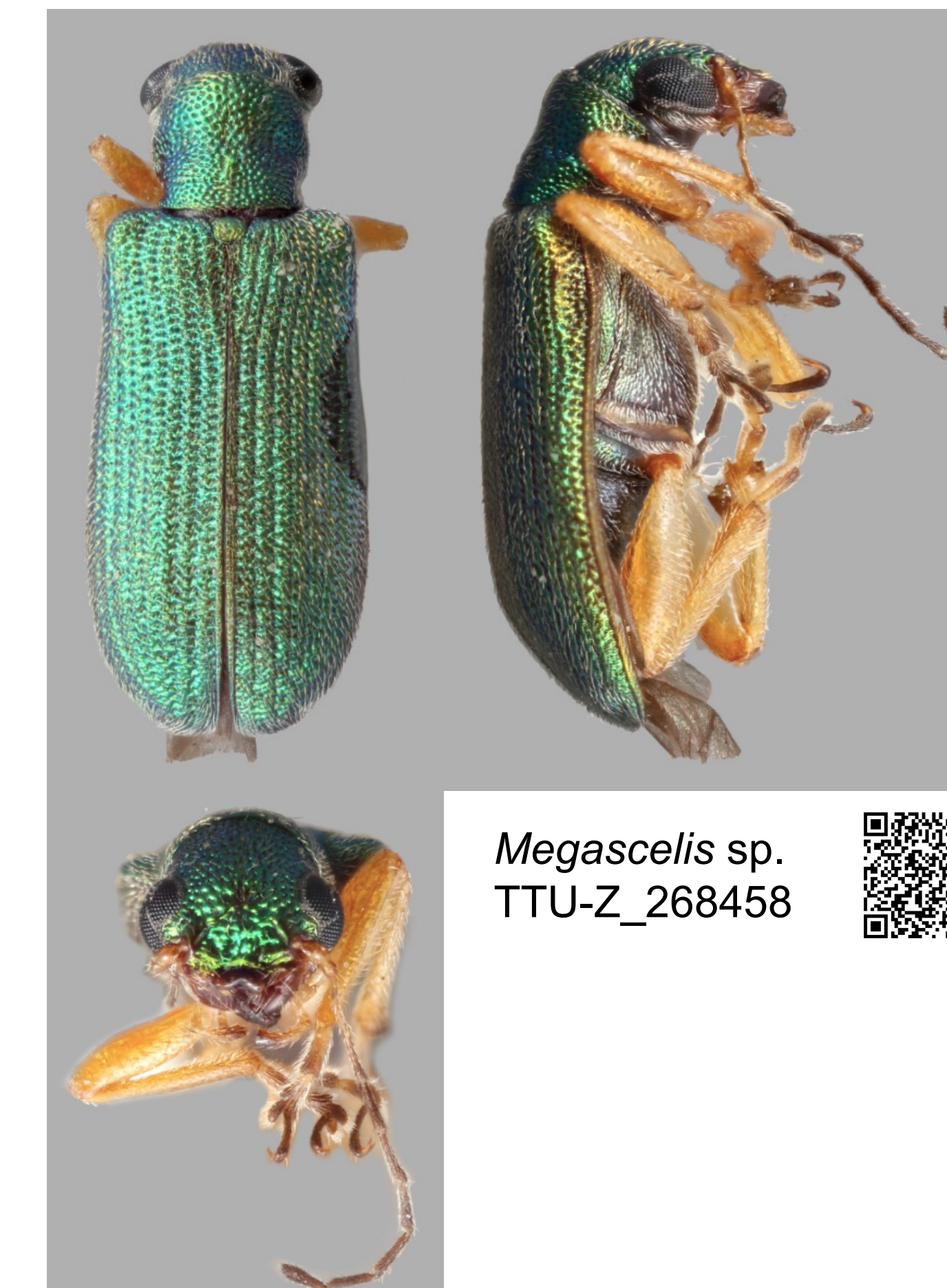
Organize and align labels on specimen pin



*Brucita marmorata*  
TTU-Z\_292755



*Disonycha arizonae*  
TTU-Z\_293148



*Megascelis sp.*  
TTU-Z\_268458



## Leaf Beetle Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Insects account for at least 80% of animal life and are the most diverse group in the animal kingdom.

Why should insects be considered for conservation?

- Pollination
- Plant preservation
- Checks and balances of other insects
- Medical and technological innovation

There are at least three species of leaf beetles in need of conservation in Texas:

### *Brucita marmorata*

- Distribution: Texas to Guatemala
- Seasonality: February to October
- Host plant: *Ehretia anacua*

### *Disonycha barberi*

- Distribution: Texas to Mexico
- Seasonality: March to October
- Host plant: Genus *Phaulothamnus*

### *Megascelis texana*

- Distribution: Texas to Mexico
- Seasonality: October to November
- Host plant: *Leucaena pulverulenta*




## Curation and Digitization

Specimens in biological collections need to be sorted, organized, identified, and digitized (their associated information entered into a database) to be accessible for research.

Data from specimens in biological collections can provide information on:

- Diversity
- Distribution
- Seasonality
- Plant associations

## Links of interest

- Natural Science Research Laboratory 
- Invertebrate Zoology Collection 
- iNaturalist observations around the Museum of Texas Tech University 

## References

- <https://explorer.natureserve.org>
- <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>
- <https://www.iucnredlist.org/search>

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the support of my advisor at the Invertebrate Zoology Collection, Dr. Jennifer Girón. I'm also thankful to Dr. Scott Longing from the Plant and Soil Science Department for introducing me to the world of entomology.