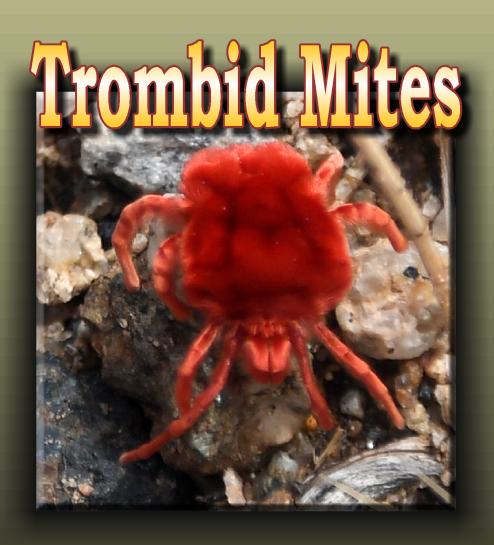
## TROMBIA Mites)



(151 Families Worldwide)

# TROMBIDITO AR (Velvet Mites)

### Giant Velvet Mite



Dolan Springs, AZ

### Measurements:

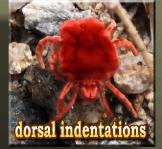
Ave. Length: .5" Leg Span: .75"

### Distinguishing field characteristics:

large size; bright red body covered entirely with fine, silky hairs (thus the name "velvet" mite); slightly tapered "waist"; 8 legs, short (except front tactile pair); tiny eyes; very large chelicerae



Dolan Springs, AZ



Dolan Springs, AZ

### Notes

common, but subterranean, thus seldom encountered; solitary; inhabits desert scrublands of sw US and nw MEX (Mojave and Sonoran deserts); aka Red Velvet Mite, Rain Bug; complex lifecycle: egg - pre-larva (inactive) - larva (ectoparasitic on other arthropods) - protonymph - deutonymph - tritonymph - free-living adult; female lays large mass of eggs in soil (one generation per year); color is aposematic (unpleasant to toxic taste, smell, etc.),



Dolan Springs, AZ

thus a warning to predators; harmless to humans; slow methodical hunter; larva consume small anthropods and their eggs, while adult diet consists mainly of termites and ants

Mojave presence: native

### Comments

Though technically not rare in a general sense, these very large mites (among the largest of all mites) spend most of



their lives underground and out of view, emerging only after heavy rains. Thus, one can easily spend an entire lifetime without ever seeing a giant velvet mite! Even a good drenching is no guarantee of an encounter; you just have to be in the right place at the right time, as I was on August 2, 2023 near Dolan Springs, Arizona. It rained the previous day, so I went out just to explore and see what Nature would offer me when I spotted my first ever specimen of



this genus. And a few minutes later...my second! As for exact species, only an entomologist (which I am not) with extensive experience studying velvet mites can make a precise determination. However, D. magnificum is a verified Arizona species.