

Sex Determination Symbols

Female: designated by "♀" the astronomical sign for Venus: that sex in which the ova are developed (Smith 1906).

Male: that sex having organs for the production of spermatozoa: designated by ♂, the astronomical sign for Mars (Smith 1906).

Neuter: the term applied to workers or undeveloped females in some *Hymenoptera*: indicated by ♀ or ♂, an imperfect form of Venus sign (Smith 1906).

Sex: as a number, six: the physical difference between male and female: usually indicated by the sign of Mars (♂) for male, and Venus (♀) for female ; workers or undeveloped females have the sign of Venus without the cross line (♀), or a combination of the two others (♂) (Smith 1906).

"Does the directionality of the symbol matter? It seems well agreed that ♀ means "female." But if the symbol is turned upwards like so: ♂, does it mean "male" or "female"?"

Yes, it matters. The "reverse female symbol" (a "+" on top of a circle) generally means male. So, if something is directed upwards, or obliquely upwards, either a little arrow, or a cross, that is generally male. -David Redei (ECN-1)

- ♀ : Unicode encodes the FEMALE SIGN at U+2640
(type 2640, then hit Alt and X simultaneously)
- ♂ : Unicode encodes the MALE SIGN at U+2642
- ♃ : Unicode encodes the MERCURY SIGN at U+263F
- ♁ : Unicode encodes the EARTH SIGN at U+2641
- ♀ : no Unicode sign for the "imperfect Venus" sign

Smith, J. B. 1906. Explanation of Terms Used in Entomology. Brooklyn Entomological Society, Lancaster, PA, 154 pp.