

Kids Korner

It's A Buggy World

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Imagine a world without any insects.

Hooray! No bees or wasps that sting. No flies in our kitchen. No ants at our picnic or fleas on our dog or cats.

But wait!

Who would make our honey?

Who would pollinate our apple trees and sweet corn?

What would the fish in the streams eat?

We wouldn't have milk to drink because insects pollinate the alfalfa and clover we feed as hay to dairy cows.

We need insects! In fact, our world couldn't exist without insects.

We know that bees pollinate crops. Let's look at some other beneficial bugs from around the world.

How about munching and crunching a handful of roasted

termites like they eat in South Africa. We can gather the eggs of the water boatman to make a Mexican cake. Do fried caterpillars and chocolate-covered ants sound good to you?

The crunch when eating an insect probably comes from its exoskeleton, the skeleton on the outside of its body. Insects have no bones. The exoskeleton can't grow as a child's bones grow either. When the exoskeleton becomes too tight, the insect grows a new one and then sheds the outer one in a process called molting.

Did you know that the "dairy farmer ants" milk aphids! When the aphids walk by, the ants gently stroke their backs, causing the aphids to secrete a honey-

dew liquid which the ants then eat!

To learn more about insects, read a "World Book" encyclopedia.

Buggy Body Parts

Not every bug that scuttles across the sidewalk or lands on a flower is an insect. Is a spider an insect? Why or why not? Read on, and then decide for yourself.

Insects have three main body parts: the head, thorax, and abdomen.

The head contains the antennae for smelling and feeling; the mouthparts for chewing or sucking; and compound eyes that are usually made up of thousands of lenses.



The ladybug is more heroine than lady! When the scale insect pest almost destroyed California's fruit crop in the late 1800's ladybugs were shipped in to eat the pests and save the crop.

- A flea can broad-jump 13 inches.

- There are four times as many insects as all other kinds of animals combined.

- The fairy flea is about one-hundredth of an inch long while the Goliath beetle can grow to more than four inches long.

- The Atlas moth has a wingspan of about 10 inches.

- Some insects can live in hot springs, frozen streams, crude oil, and embalming solutions.

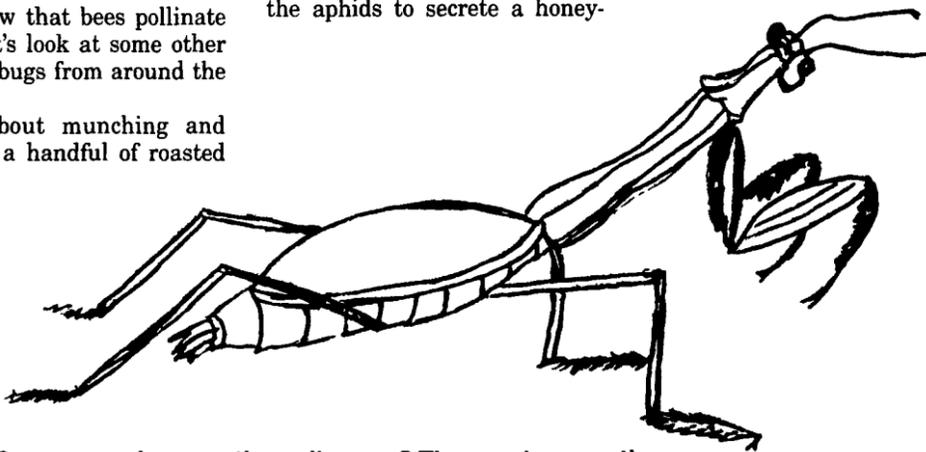
- Of the 800,000 species of insects, less than one percent are harmful.

- How far can butterflies fly on food energy stored in their bodies? 100 miles.

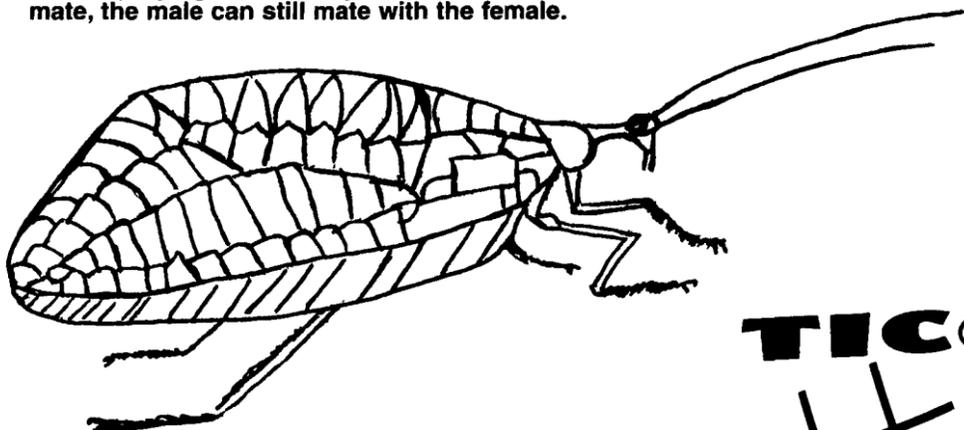
- Insects eyes are always open. They don't have eyelids.

- The growth cycle from egg to adult in some insects is only a few days. For others, it's 17 years.

- Adult mayflies live only a few hours or days. Queen termites may live for more than 50 years.



Does a praying mantis really pray? The praying mantis usually lives in tropical or warm climates. In 1899, someone brought the European Mantis to Rochester, New York, and it has been spreading through the Eastern United States ever since. They eat other insects. Even though a female praying mantis may eat the head and brain of its mate, the male can still mate with the female.



The delicate wings of the lacewing can be clear brown or green. Some lacewings give off a strong odor. They eat aphids.

The thorax has three sets of legs. The legs are shaped to serve a purpose - swimming, carrying pollen, jumping, digging, or tasting food.

If an insect has one set of wings, they're attached to the thorax. If they have a second set, that second set is attached to the abdomen. The abdomen houses the internal organs.

Now go find a spider. Is it an insect? How many body parts does it have? How many legs?

You'll discover that a spider runs on eight legs and has two main body parts. You won't see any antennae or wings on a spider either, so they're now insects.

Fun Facts

- Insects, birds, and bats are the only animals that have wings.

- Dragonflies are the fastest flying insects (up to 60 mph).

- Nearly 1 million kinds of animals have been named by scientists. More than 800,000 of these are insects.

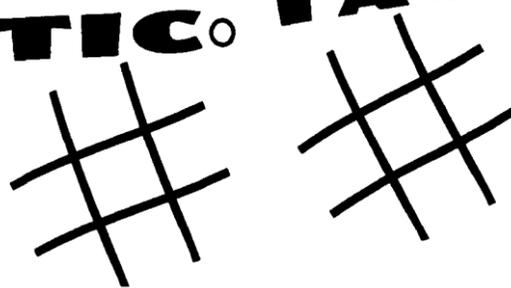
- Seven to ten thousand insects are discovered by scientists every year.

- Some insect noises can be heard up to a mile away.

- Insects have no lungs.

- Insects have enormous strength.

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SEEK AND FIND

FIND THESE WORDS IN THE PUZZLE BELOW.

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|--------|----------|---------|
| BEAM | EXTREME | SCREAM |
| CREAM | MOONBEAM | STEAM |
| DREAM | REGIME | SUPREME |
| ESTEEM | SCHEME | TEAM |

THE WORDS READ UP, DOWN AND ACROSS.

M O O N B E E M R T
 E U Y S C R E A M Y
 M O O N B E A M B W
 E E Y M M G T R E E
 R S Q A A I T E A M
 P T W E E M A M M A
 U E X T R E M E S E
 S E D S D F G H N R
 X M C R E N M C D C
 E S T E M D S S A W

FIND THE TWINS

WHICH TWO ARE EXACTLY ALIKE?



CONNECT the dots

