

Amazing Soil...

Go Insects!



Insects (bugs) are the most numerous animal on earth!



They play lots of roles in our lives—some good and some not so good. Some insects are pollinators which are important in producing fruits we eat each day. Other important tasks insects are

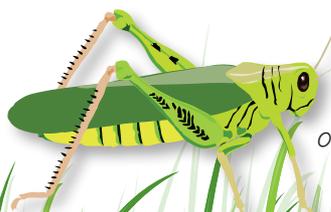
involved in include serving as a food source for wildlife, making honey and silk, being nature's recyclers (breaking down manure, dead animals and wood), controlling other insects, being an indicator for water quality and serving in research projects. Of course some insects (about the same number as those that do good things for us) are considered pests because of something they do. Some insects feed on crops or stored grains causing damage. Some insects bite or sting

you— like a mosquito, bee or wasp.

Some insects spread diseases to plants and sometimes animals.

Most insects lay eggs to produce new insects. Insects vary in how they grow after hatching from the egg. Some insects have three life stages; an egg, a nymph and an adult. The nymph looks like a smaller version of the adult. About 15 percent of insects have this “incomplete metamorphosis.” A grasshopper is a good example of incomplete metamorphosis. The other 85 percent have what we call “complete metamorphosis” where the insect grows from an egg, a caterpillar, then a pupa and finally an adult.

A butterfly is a good example of complete metamorphosis.



Fun facts about insects:



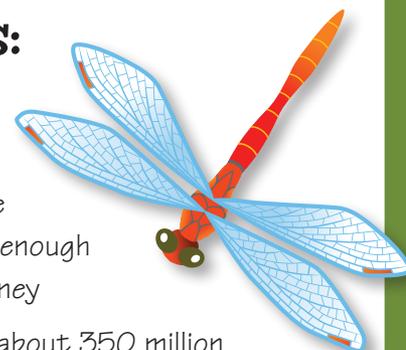
Ants can lift and carry 50 times their weight



A hive of honeybees has to make about 10 million trips to gather enough nectar to make one pound of honey



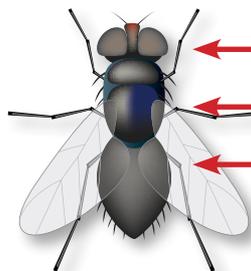
Insects have been on the earth about 350 million years while humans only about 130,000 years



Fun to try:

You can make your own insect collection. You can collect insects with a net or simply by looking around your yard or garden and capturing them with your hands. You will need to kill the insects by placing them in a jar with a layer of hardened Plaster of Paris that is then soaked with finger nail polish remover. After placing the insects in the jar they will die in a day or two. Larger insects may need more time. You can then remove the insect and pin it to a board. You can identify and label your insect. How many insects can you find in your yard or garden?

Insects have three body parts—a head, a thorax and an abdomen. They have six legs; many have one or two pairs of wings and a pair of antennae.



Head

Thorax

Abdomen



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