

Munching millipedes

Millipedes push through the soil, or along the surface, searching for food. Their smooth, strong bodies help them to slide through the soil or **leaf litter**, pushed along by all those legs.



Slow movers

Despite the name, which means 'a thousand legs', no millipede has as many as that. Millipedes do have lots of legs though – two pairs on each segment of their body.

This flat-backed millipede can grow up to 2.4 cm long.

▲ The flat-backed millipede looks a bit like a centipede.



This snake millipede can grow up to 3 cm long.

▲ This is a snake millipede. A millipede moves slowly on its short legs.

Helpful plant-eaters

Unlike centipedes, millipedes do not need to be speedy because they eat dead plant material. They help us all by breaking down rotting or dead plants.

Defence

When a millipede feels in danger, it curls up in a spiral. This makes it more difficult to attack. Some millipedes also squirt a bad-smelling liquid that puts many animals off eating them.

TOP TIP!

Millipedes are nocturnal. Look for them resting in dark, damp places like soil, under stones or under the bark of old trees.



▲ The pill millipede looks very like the pill woodlouse.

How to tell a millipede from a centipede

MILLIPEDE:	CENTIPEDE:
slow mover	fast mover
two pairs of legs per segment	one pair of legs per segment
rounded body	flat body
short antennae	long antennae

Sheltering snails

Snails can be hard to find in the daytime. Many of them shelter from the sun under rocks and stones. Here, the cool and the damp stop them from drying out.



◀ Two snails leave their stone shelter. Snails often return to rest in the same spot.

This snail shell is 1.8 cm long.



The shell

The snail's hard shell protects it from enemies because the snail can pull itself right inside. The shell also helps to stop the snail from drying out. In very hot or cold weather, the snail pulls itself inside its shell and seals the entrance with slime.



Snails have two pairs of stalks, called **tentacles**, on their heads. Each of the longer pair has a small black dot at the end – the snail's eyes.

Watch it eat!

What you will need:

- A snail
- A jam jar
- A vegetable (lettuce leaf, cabbage, etc)
- A magnifying glass

What to do:

- Collect a snail and put it in a jam jar with some vegetable leaves.
- Use your magnifying glass to watch how the snail scrapes away at a leaf. It uses rows of tiny teeth, called radula, on its tongue.
- Remember to put the snail back where you found it.



TOP TIP!

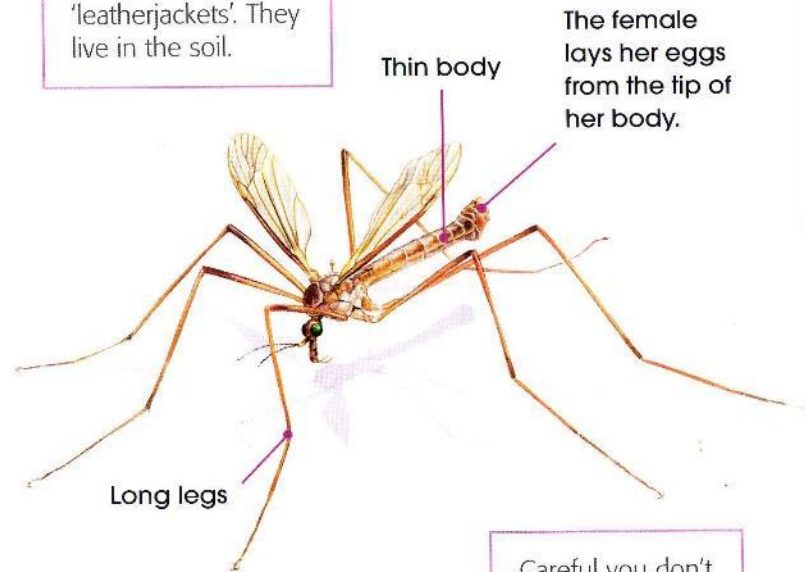
You could also search for snails under plant pots or logs and amongst ivy and other trailing plants.



Crane fly

Lots of people call these 'daddy-long-legs'. They have very long legs and only one pair of wings. Crane flies usually come out at night. You sometimes see them fluttering around lights.

The grubs are called 'leatherjackets'. They live in the soil.



Careful you don't pull their legs off!

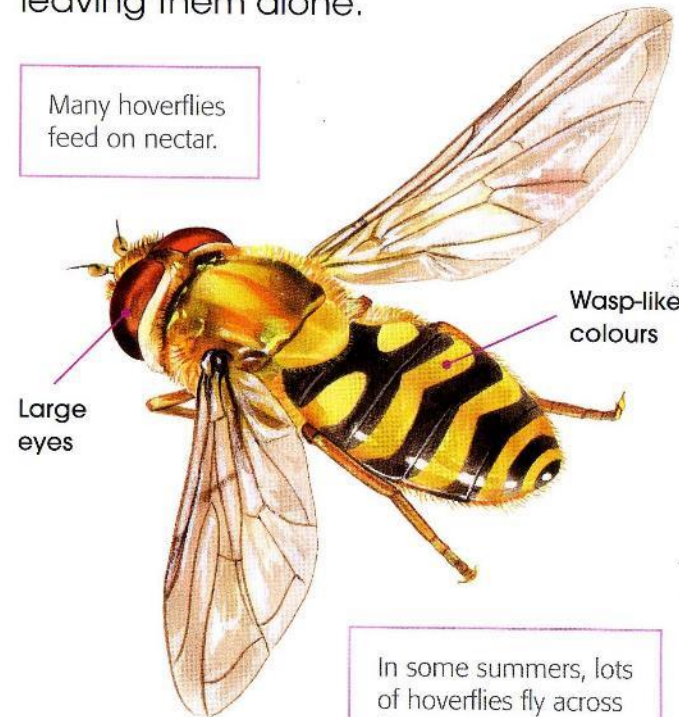


Hoverfly

Most hoverflies look like wasps or bees. But, it's a trick – hoverflies cannot sting. Their bright colours trick their enemies into leaving them alone.

Hoverflies live in gardens, parks, woods and meadows.

Many hoverflies feed on nectar.



In some summers, lots of hoverflies fly across the sea to the UK.



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Any words appearing in the text in bold, like this, are explained in the Glossary.



Glossary

Amphibians Animals that can live in water and on land. Frogs, toads, newts and salamanders are all different kinds of amphibians.

Aphids Small insects that suck the juices out of plants. Other names for them are greenflies (if they are green) or blackflies (if they are black).

Beetle An insect with a hard, shiny covering over its wings.

Bristles Short, stiff hairs.

Cocoons Cases made by insects from silk that comes from inside their bodies. Inside its cocoon the insect is at the stage in its life called a pupa. This is when it changes from a young insect to a grown-up one.



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Frogspawn Frogs' eggs. They look like clear jelly with the young tadpole growing inside. Toads lay the same kind of eggs.

Funnel web A funnel web is a spider's web that is the shape of a funnel.

Honeydew A liquid made in the bodies of aphids. Aphids suck the juice from plants and pass it out of their bodies as sweet honeydew.

Insects Animals that have six legs and a body in three parts. There are thousands of different kinds of insects in the world.

Larvae The young of many kinds of insects are called larvae. Caterpillars are the larvae of butterflies.

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Nectar A sweet liquid found inside flowers.

Orb web An orb web is a spider's web that is the shape of a circle.

Pests Animals that do damage to plants.

Pupa An insect that is changing into an adult.

Segments Parts of something.

Silk Fine thread produced by spiders from inside their bodies. They use it to make webs. Some insects also make silk.

Spokes The bits of a wheel that stick out from the middle to the edge.



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