Interesting Insects: 
A to Z

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*Note: Words in **bold print** are found in the glossary at the back of the book.
A is for antlion. Antlions dig a winged and look like damselflies
waiting antlion. The adults are
they fall into the jaws of the
because the soil is so loose, and
the insects cannot escape.
A cone-shaped pit in loose soil and
wait for small insects to fall in.

B is for backswimmer. Backswimmers live in fresh water ponds
and lakes. They swim upside-down, and capture insects that
land on the surface of the water. They have a painful bite.
Cockroach

The world's fastest running insects are the cockroaches, but most species are not pests. They are often thought of as household problems, but cockroaches are often helpful. C is for cockroach.

Dragonfly & Damselfly

D is for dragonfly and damselfly. Dragonflies hold their wings out flat at rest, while damselflies hold their wings up at rest. Both have nymphs that live in ponds and streams. The adults and young are predatory.
E is for earwig. Earwigs like to hide in dark places and scavenge for food. Female earwigs guard and clean their eggs. Contrary to popular lore, they do not enter people's ears and eat their brains.

F is for firefly. Fireflies are beetles that can produce light. They use light signals to attract mates. Some mimic the signals of other species to lure them in and eat them.
H is for hellgrammite. Hellgrammites are the larvae of dobsonflies. They live in fresh water streams, and are used as bait for catching fish. They breathe through gills along their abdomens. Hellgrammites are large, and can give a painful bite.

G is for grasshopper. Grasshoppers and their relatives, crickets and katydids, have strong hind legs for jumping. Grasshoppers rub their legs against their bodies to make noise. Locusts (close relatives of grasshoppers) can swarm in the billions, destroying crops.
Moth

To scare predators, moths on their hind wings, which they use (called frillers), to moths have large eyes. Feed as adults, but are voracious as larvae. These silkworm moths family. They do not give silkworms moth family. They do not give silkworms moth family.

J is for jewel beetle. Jewel beetles, or metallic wood borers, are so called because many have bright metallic colors. In some parts of the world they are used as money and jewelry. Some live up to 20 years as larvae, feeding on wood.

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Ked

K is for ked. Sheep keds are wingless flies. They are specially adapted to live on sheep and suck their blood.

Lacewing

L is for lacewing. Lacewings lay their eggs on stalks, so the larvae do not eat each other. Adults and larvae are beneficial because they eat pests such as aphids, mites, whiteflies and moth eggs. Lacewings communicate by vibrating their wings. Lacewings can fly up to 1 mile in a day. Lacewings are also known as "green ladies".
Mayfly

M is for Mayfly. Mayflies have aquatic larvae that live up to 4 years in streams. The adults, however, only survive for a day or two to mate.

Netwing beetle

N is for netwing beetle. Netwing beetles have soft elytra. Many are brightly colored to warn that they are bad tasting. Some moths and other beetles mimic the same colors and patterns, so that predators don't eat them.
Owlfly

Owlfly and mantises are relatives of ants. They are not insects, but owlfly larvae are similar to ants. Instead, they do not build nests. Instead, they lie in wait for prey to come near and then capture them. The adults are swift fliers and capture prey on the wing, at dusk.

Praying mantis

P is for praying mantis. Praying mantises capture prey with their raptorial front legs. They stay still, waiting for prey to walk by and then ambush the prey. They eat a wide variety of insects and small animals.
eggs during their lives. Termites can live for up to 50 years and lay millions of eggs. Queen termites are the only female in the colony that lays eggs. Queen termites have very small heads and large, hairy bodies. The queen is like a queen bee. The queen is for Queen Termites. Social insects like termites, ants, and bees have a queen.

R is for robber fly. Robber flies are predatory flies that capture prey in mid-air. They can tackle insects much larger than themselves. Some mimic bees and wasps to get close to their prey.
**Scorpionfly**

S is for scorpionfly. The male scorpionfly has an abdomen shaped like a scorpion's stinger. However, it cannot sting. Scorpionflies are not true flies.

**Treehopper**

T is for treehopper. Treehoppers have straw-like mouths, which they use to suck plant juices. Most have special bodies to help them hide from predators. Some mimic thorns and buds, while others just look strange. As their name suggests, they can hop off of a plant or tree very quickly.
Undervwing

Y is for underwing moth.

Velvet ant

Y is for velvet ant. Velvet ants are actually wasps. The males are winged, while the females are not. Females have a painful sting. A common species is called a cow-killer, because people thought that they could sting cows to death.
Eggs inside.

W is for weevil. The weevil does not bite the doll, and then lays her eggs in the doll, and then lays her eggs in the doll, and then lays her

W is for weevil. The weevil does not bite the doll, and then lays her eggs in the doll, and then lays her eggs in the doll, and then lays her

X is for xerces blue butterfly. The xerces blue is an extinct insect from California. It became extinct in 1941 through habitat loss and collecting. Today the Xerces society helps to make people aware of insects and other small creatures that are in danger of becoming extinct.
Yucca moth

Yucca moths have the record for the longest flight of any insect, up to 30 years. Yucca seeds are the only food source for the developing yucca plant. The moth is the only thing that pollinates the plant, while the yucca moth, yucca moths have a mutual relationship with the plant.

Zorapteran

Z is for zorapteran. Zorapterans are tiny insects that scavenge for food in litter and under bark. They are the smallest group of insects with about 30 species total around the world.
Insect Glossary

**Ambush:** when an insect surprises another insect in order to capture it

**Diapause:** similar to hibernation, but can happen during any season

**Elytra:** the hard outer wings on beetles

**Extinct:** when an insect population dies out completely

**Larva (plural=larvae):** the young of an insect that goes through complete metamorphosis (egg --> larva --> pupa --> adult)

**Mimic:** when an insect looks or acts like something else such as another insect or a plant part

**Nymph (plural=nymphs):** a young insect that goes through incomplete metamorphosis (egg --> nymph --> adult)

**Predatory:** characteristic of an insect that feeds on other animals

**Raptorial:** a special leg design that allows insects to capture prey

**Scavenger:** an insect that feeds on decaying matter and anything it comes upon