



BUG HUNT



Explorer Notes

Amazing Architects: Orb weaver spiders create intricate, wheel-shaped webs that can span several feet. These webs are designed to catch flying insects, which the spiders then eat.

Pest Controllers: By preying on a variety of insects like flies, mosquitoes, and moths, orb weavers help keep the insect population in check, making them valuable allies in the garden.

Non-Aggressive: Orb weaver spiders are generally harmless to humans. They prefer to avoid confrontation and will usually only bite if provoked.

Nature's Artists: Each orb weaver species creates a unique web pattern, which can be used to identify different species. Their webs are not only functional but also beautiful examples of natural engineering.

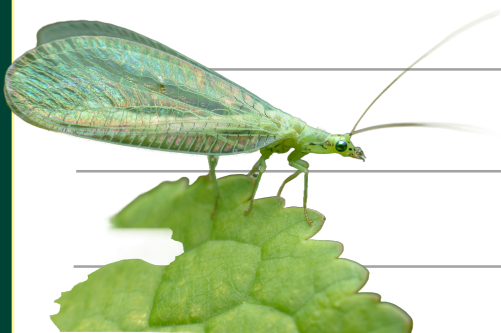


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LACEWINGS

Explorer Notes



Fierce Predators: Lacewings are effective predators in both their adult and larval stages. Their larvae can consume over 200 insects each week, making them powerful allies in pest control.

Garden Helpers: The two major families of lacewings are green lacewings (Chrysopidae) and brown lacewings (Hemerobiidae). Green lacewings are more commonly found in yards and gardens.

Beneficial Hunters: Lacewing larvae are known for their appetite, feeding on a wide variety of pests such as aphids, mites, and caterpillars, helping to protect plants from damage.

Gentle Adults: Adult lacewings are typically gentle creatures that feed on nectar, pollen, and honeydew, contributing to pollination and the overall health of your garden.

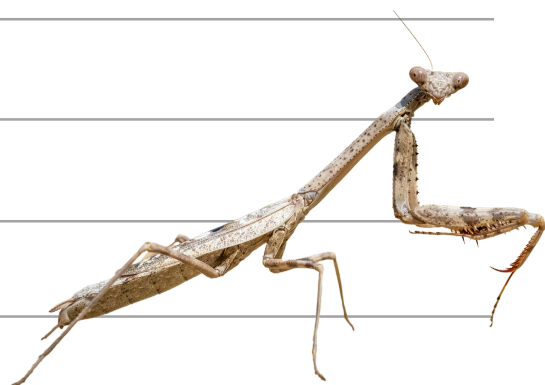


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PRAYING MANTIS

Explorer Notes



Egg Cases: Many people mistakenly destroy mantis egg cases, not realizing what they are. The egg cases are about the size of a quarter and look like many layers of cream-colored paper pressed together. They are typically found on branches or flat surfaces.

Nature's Helpers: By preserving mantis egg cases, you help ensure the presence of these beneficial insects in your garden, aiding in the control of pest populations.

Effective Predators: Praying mantises prey on a wide range of insects, making them excellent natural pest controllers in gardens and yards.

Local Species: The Carolina mantis (*Stagmomantis carolina*) is a common species found in Nebraska and is easily recognizable by its slender body and camouflage coloring.



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ASSASSIN BUGS

Explorer Notes

Handle with Care: Although they are beneficial, it's best to admire assassin bugs from a distance as their bite can be painful. They are not poisonous to humans but should be left alone to do their important work.

Carnivorous Predators: Assassin bugs are carnivorous and play a vital role in controlling pest populations in gardens and crops by capturing and consuming harmful insects.

Efficient Hunters: With powerful forelegs and a specialized beak called a rostrum, they swiftly capture prey, inject poison to paralyze them, and then suck up the liquefied insides, ensuring effective pest control.

Natural Pest Control: By feeding on a variety of pests, assassin bugs reduce the need for chemical pesticides, promoting a healthier environment for plants and other beneficial insects.