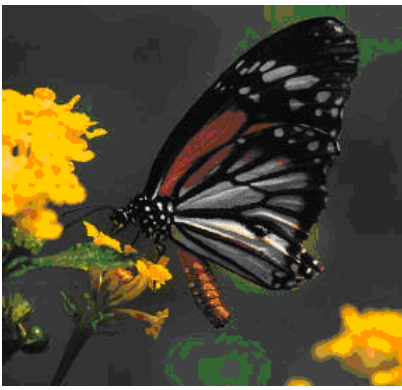


Go Buggy in Your Own Neighborhood!



Butterfly

Hidden in your neighborhood is a tiny universe! There are hundreds of mini-beasts roaming around...under rotting leaves, in the corner of the shed, and creeping along in the grass. Some of these critters are helpful and others aren't...some of them even sing! Here are a few familiar insects you might find roaming around in California!



Cicada



Bumble Bee



Lady Beetle



Assassin Bug



Tiger Moth Caterpillar



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Did you know that there are more bugs on this planet than all other animals combined? Yep, it's true. In fact, there are about 200 million insects for every one person. With those kinds of numbers, it really is a surprise that so many bugs go about their business hidden from us. Here is a list of simple activities for kids to discover the squirmy, slithery, secretive world of insects right in their own yard.

Tools:

Going buggy is easy! Here are a few things that will help you in your exploration of mini-beasts:

- *A small hand lens or magnifying glass
- *An empty, washed-out plastic juice or soda bottle.
- *A plastic spoon
- *A flashlight
- *An Observation Sheet (print a ready-to-use one from the Kids in Parks webpage)
- *A pencil

Activity Ideas:

- *Gently peek underneath a rotting log or pile of leaves. What do you see going on under there?
- *Observe the types of insects you see in different places in your neighborhood. Do certain types of bugs prefer the shade? Dry places? Wet places?
- *Keep Observation Sheets of the same place during different seasons. What stays the same? What changes? Why do you think you see these similarities and differences?

Fast Facts:



Insects have three body parts: head, thorax & abdomen.



Insects have 6 legs but spiders have 8 legs.



Dragonflies have eyes that let them see in nearly all directions at one time! They can even spot prey from over 60 feet away.

***Whenever you are outside exploring -- whether it is mini-beasts or giant trees -- remember that some living things can be harmful. Some bugs can sting, some animals might bite, and some plants are poisonous. Keeping a safe distance is always your best bet.



Go Buggy in Your Own Neighborhood!

Nature Journal Observation Sheet

Your Name: Jose

Today's Date:

June 1, 2008

Your Location: Modesto

Describe the weather:

It is kind of warm out today. The Thermometer says it is 91 degrees. There are big puffy clouds in the sky.

What do you see around you?

I am lying down in the grass in the park near my house. If I move some of the blades of grass, I can see a worm slowly slithering along. I wonder if he sees me.

What do you hear?

The worm is completely silent as he slides through the grass. I can hear birds in tress on the edge of the grassy field.

What do you smell?

The grass smells kind of wet and like dirt. The grass was just cut so it smells fresh.

Choose something to study...a bird, a bug, a mammal. Describe it in as much detail as you can here and then sketch it.

I am looking at a worm slinking along in a small spot of grass in the park near my house. I never would have seen the worm if I hadn't gotten down on my hands and knees and looked really closely in between each of the blades of grass. He was hiding down low near the soil.



Remember to show respect for all creatures! If you disturb a mini-beast in your exploration, be sure to treat it gently and when you are done observing, be sure to replace the critter and any leaves or dirt you moved.