



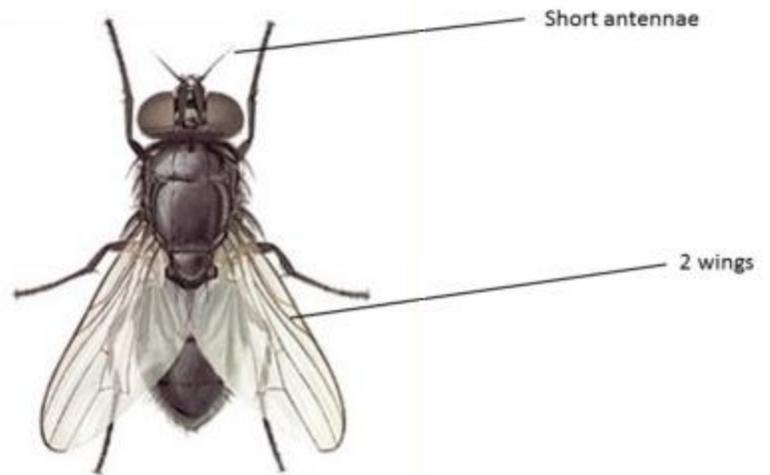
**Baltimore Woods
Nature Center**
Nature in your hands

Gotta Catch 'em All!

There are some groups of insects you probably wish you would see less of— fruit flies and mosquitoes for instance. But other bugs are always a joy to see, whether a praying mantis or a shiny jewel-like beetle. This week's challenge is to see how many different groups of insects you can see by the end of the week (or, you can keep your checklist going throughout June)!

In this packet, you will find a list of these different groups of insects so you can check them off as you see them, but first a little information to help you know what bugs fall into the different groups.

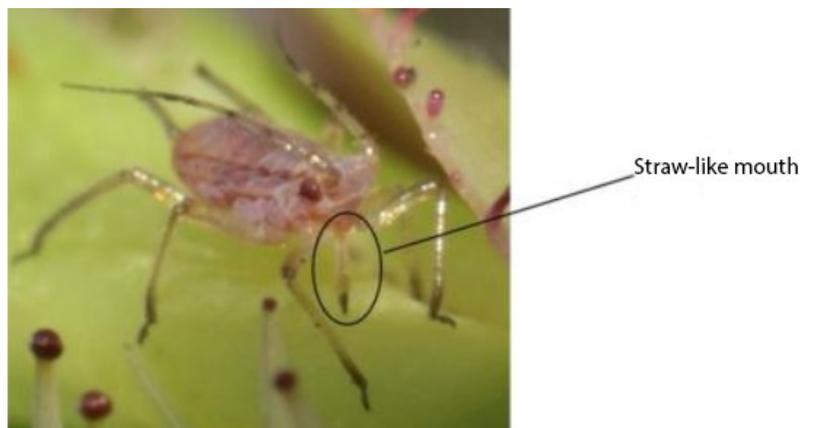
First, the **flies**, a very common group of insects in and around our homes. They have only two wings, while many other insects have four. They often have large eyes and antennae shorter than their heads.



The **beetles** are one of the most diverse groups of insects, including ladybugs, which are often found in our homes. They have a hard outer set of wings protecting a softer inner set used for flight.



The **true bugs** have a large range in size and appearance, and include aphids and leaf-hoppers. They all have a straw-like mouth allowing them to slurp up their food, whether it be plant juices or the insides of other bugs!





Large eyes

Wings down when resting

Long cylindrical body

The **dragonflies (above)** love hanging out around water– you’re most likely to see them near a stream or pond. They have large eyes that help them to hunt other insects in midair and a long cylinder-shaped body. They look similar to their cousins the **damselflies (below)**, which also tend to be near water, but dragonflies hold their wings out when resting while damselflies hold them up and together.



Large eyes

Wings up when resting

Long cylindrical body

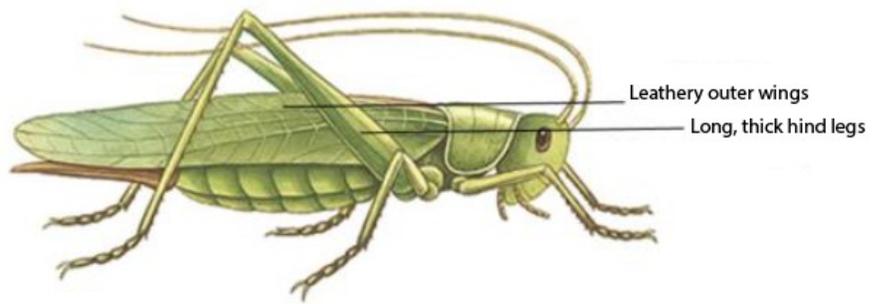
Butterflies are one of the most vibrant and colorful groups of insects. They have two sets of wings covered in tiny scales and long antenna that grow wider at the end. You can check them off if you see a moth or a caterpillar too! A caterpillar is just a young butterfly.



Antennae widened at the end

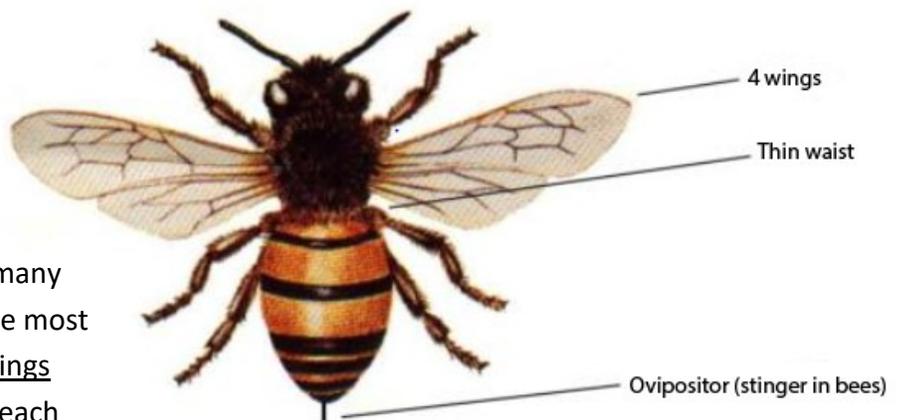
Two sets of wings

Grasshoppers are common in fields and meadows, and if you live near one of these, you may find one in your home! They have long, strong hind legs for jumping, and a leathery outer set of wings for protection. You don't usually see their inner wings but they are often very bright and colorful!



Earwigs are not necessarily the most beautiful of insects, but they don't cause any harm, and they really don't want anything to do with your ears! They have pincers on the ends of their bodies for capturing their prey and defending themselves. Their leathery wings are short, and don't cover much of their bodies, and their antennae resemble strings of beads.

Bees, wasps and ants are common in many different environments, and may be the most diverse insect group. They have four wings which are connected to each other on each side by tiny hooks. Their bodies get very thin in the middle, and at the end have an ovipositor, a structure for laying eggs, that works as a stinger in some groups like the bees. While they can sting, they generally won't do so unless they feel threatened. They play a critical role in pollinating plants, as well as other important jobs in our environment.



Now that you have an idea of how to identify these different groups you can keep your eyes open throughout the week, and see how many different ones you can see! If you can get outside, make sure to look at the leaves and flowers of plants, as that's where many insects like to hang out. As you see the different groups, you can check them off on the checklist below. If you can, try and figure out what kind of fly or beetle or other type of bug you saw. Happy hunting!

✓	DATE	NAME	PICTURE
		Bee / Ant What kind?	
		Earwig What kind?	
		Grasshopper What kind?	
		Butterfly What kind?	
		True Bug What kind?	
		Beetle What kind?	
		Fly What kind?	
		Damselfly What kind?	
		Dragonfly What kind?	