

Arthropods and Flowers

POLLINATORS:

Hymenoptera - bees, wasps, sawflies
Diptera - flies
Lepidoptera - butterflies, moths
Coleoptera - beetles

HERBIVORES:

Lepidoptera - caterpillars
Orthoptera - grasshoppers, katydids, crickets
Hemiptera - homopterans, true bugs
Coleoptera - beetles
Acari - mites
Thysanoptera - thrips

PREDATORS & PARASITOIDS:

Araneae - spiders
Acari - mites
Diptera - flies
Mantodea - mantids
Hymenoptera - wasps
Hemiptera - true bugs
Coleoptera - beetles
Neuroptera - lacewings
Odonata - dragonflies, damselflies
Thysanoptera - thrips

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Hymenoptera - ants

- Colorful petals attract pollinators during the day, odors help more at night.
- Many insects can see in ultraviolet but not visible red.
- Plants pollinated by wind ("We don't need no stinkin' insects!") include grasses and many trees.
- Flowers are a concentration of desirable resources, attracting fauna like a waterhole in the desert.
- Insects and other arthropods are a MAJOR component of the fauna in all ecosystems and are usually low in the food chain, utilizing energy contained in plants and making it available to other animals. A plant that has not fed an animal is not doing its job!

Tips for Observing Arthropods:

1. Think SMALL
2. Look for motion - visually follow flying insects to see where they land
3. Learn where different critters live: around flowers, on leaves/branches, under stones, in water
4. Note leaf/petal damage, webs, droppings
5. Scan for color and pattern differences in habitat
6. Move slowly - you are bigger than arthropods and they find you scary

Tips for Identifying Arthropods:

1. Start general and narrow it down from there
2. Just because it looks like a species in a book doesn't mean it is - check for look-alikes
3. Be satisfied with getting the Family or Genus correct - species might be an unobtainable goal
4. Get familiar with your guide book, favorite bug websites, and local human resources
5. Keep a list, take notes, and make a collection (photos, specimens, or drawings)
6. Never give up

Best General Arthropod Identification Resources:

Website: bugguide.net

Insect Book: [Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America](#) by Eaton & Kaufman

Spider Book: [Spiders of the Eastern United States](#) by Howell & Jenkins

Best Wildflower Guide for Central Texas:

[Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country](#) by Enquist

compiled by Valerie Bugh - austinbug.com - larvalbug.com - e-mail: larvalbug@att.net