



4-H Study Materials for Entomology Contests for Juniors (Age 9-11)

January 2003

IV. Classification

Why Classification Is Important

Classification of living organisms is based on a scheme of grouping similar organisms together. Each group is in turn made up of smaller groups that share even more characteristics. The most precise group is a species. Individuals in a species are capable of interbreeding and reproducing additional members.

Classification of Insects and Their Relatives

Multicellular animals are classified into the kingdom called Animalia. The kingdom is further divided into smaller groups called Phyla. Insects and their close relatives belong to a Phylum called Arthropoda. Within this Phylum we study two smaller groups called Classes. We study the Class called Hexapoda or Insecta (insects) and the Class called Arachnida (ticks, mites, spiders, and scorpions).

Most insects have the following characteristics:

1. A body divided into three parts (head, thorax, and abdomen).
2. Three pairs of legs.
3. Usually one pair of antennae.
4. Usually one pair of compound eyes.
5. Usually two pairs of wings (in the adult stage).

The class Insecta is divided into smaller groups of closely related insects. These groups are called Orders.

The Class Arachnida has the following characteristics:

1. A body divided into two parts (cephalothorax and abdomen).
2. Four pairs of legs.
3. No antennae.

4. No wings.

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