

Insects: What's a Pest?

The world has more insects than all other living things combined. We need insects! Many insects work for us. They visit flowers and spread pollen so plants can produce fruits and vegetables. Some insects eat other insects that damage plants. These "worker" insects are welcome guests.

Sometimes insects do no harm, but they are a nuisance. And some insects harm plants, animals, and people. Insects are true pests when they hurt, damage, destroy, or make us or our animals sick.

Gnats are an important food source for birds and frogs. Those animals don't think of gnats as pests at all.

Look for spider webs. Count the insects. You'll know spiders are at work!



Insects destroy 10–15% of the world's food each year.

Did You know?

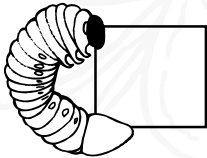
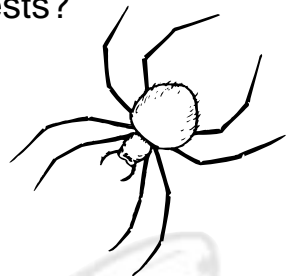
Pests or Guests

When are insects pests? And when are they welcome guests?

A In the boxes Mark **P** for pest or **G** for guest.

B Fill in the blanks to name each picture.

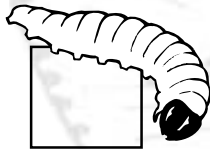
Ant, bee, cockroach, grub, mosquito, spider, wasp, worm



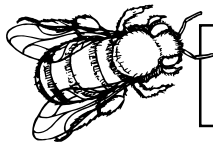
1 It chews and kills corn plants. No corn for us!

5 It preys on other insects that may harm plants.

2 It bites into apples and makes them look bad.



6 Its bite can give your dog or cat heartworm disease.

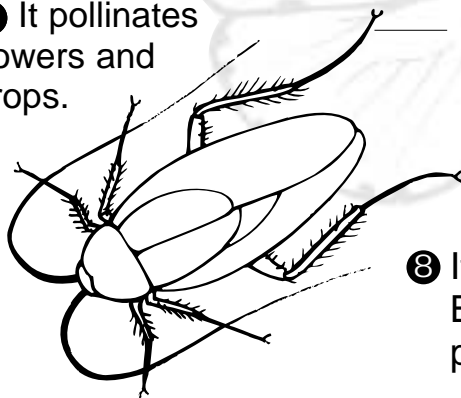


3 It pollinates flowers and crops.

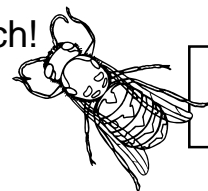
7 It shows up at your picnic



4 It can cause asthma in allergic kids.



8 It may sting. Ouch! But it's a helpful pollinator, too.



This book shows some ways to fight the pests with least harm to the earth and other creatures.

