



The glowworm



1 June 2005

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Our 2005 4-H Club Congress is in progress as I write this, so by the time you get it many of our contests will be history and everybody will have summer in full swing. Project Achievement Days are upon us as well, so juniors need to be scrambling getting their collections and other preparations done. Letters to June session campers have been mailed and a second mailing is due to go out soon to everybody.

We have a **National winner among us - Daniel Snyder is the National Bee Essay Winner for 2005.** Congratulations Daniel! He's a busy guy this summer; he's also a Mississippi entry in the National Spelling Bee, in Washington, D.C. It would really be a mouthful to make him the National Bee Essay Winner and the Nation Spelling Bee Champion all in the same year. We wish you all the best, Daniel.

Our new Bee Essay contest subject for 2006 is "**Honey Bees in Art and Culture.**" The deadline for entry is January 19, 2006. The tendency is to put off writing, since it's so far away, so I'll keep reminding you to enter the contest. Do your research now and write it when school starts back, then go on and send it in. Every state has the same opportunity, so non-Mississippi readers - check with your 4-H agent about the essay deadlines for your state. National rules for the contest are listed at www.ABFnet.org.

2nd Camp deadline is June 30th and a form is attached to this letter. Get your registration in. A number of folks have, already. Note to teachers: we will give Continuing Education Units for camp!

We're also starting a 4-H Service Project in which everybody in 4-H Entomology can participate. The Pink Palace Museum in Memphis is in need of a teaching collection for their interactive teaching sessions. They asked us for help in collecting a teaching collection for that purpose. So, if you have pinned insects which you would donate to the museum, please get them to me either at Project Achievement Days or at camp or just deliver them to your 4-H Agent for delivery to me, so we can process them for use by the museum. We have boxes to put them in for transport to the museum. Be sure to include your name, address and county with your donation.

Myths and tales

Recently, I've picked up on some stories about critters and thought it would be good to explore some of these and see if we could get to the truth of the story. One common story I hear from folks is -"*the preying mantis will spit in your eye, and then you'll die!*" Nope can't happen, first of all preying mantises are predators, so they don't even chew! No spitting and certainly no poison. The only hurt they do is to grab with their grasping front legs which have spines for holding prey and prick the skin.

DADDY-LONGLEGS ARE ONE OF THE MOST POISONOUS SPIDERS BUT THEIR FANGS ARE TOO SHORT TO BITE HUMANS -

The critters most people call daddy-longlegs are also called harvestmen. Most folks who retell this tale have no idea that they are referring to two completely separate groups of animals: "daddy-longlegs" and "daddy-longlegs spiders". In the class Arachnida, there are several Orders. Scorpions are in the Order Scorpiones, spiders are in the Order Araneae, ticks and mites are in the Order Acari and the creatures most correctly called daddy-longlegs are in their own separate Order which is Opiliones. Common names for this Order are 1) daddy-longlegs, 2) harvestmen and 3) opilionids. They are characterized by having one basic body segment which shows segmentation on the posterior portion, at most 2 eyes and all 8 legs attach to the pill-like body segment. They are usually found under logs and rocks, prefer moist habitat although they can be found in the desert, often have long flexible legs (in the temperate Northern hemisphere but there are also short-legged daddy-longlegs) and they do not produce silk so therefore they are never found in webs unless they are being eaten by spiders.

These critters make their living by eating decomposing vegetative and animal matter although are opportunist predators if they can get away with it. They do not have venom glands, fangs or any other mechanism for chemically subduing their food. Therefore, they do not have poison and, by the powers of logic, cannot be poisonous from venom. Some have defensive secretions that might be poisonous to small animals if ingested. So, for daddy-long-legs, the tale is clearly false.

There are many tales and urban legends about insects, some are based in a `grain' of truth, but most is just wild fantasy. Almost everyone has heard a wild story about insects, spiders or other arthropods. We'd like to hear your favorite.

Happy Buggin'

Michael R. Williams, PhD
Extension Entomologist

**ATTENTION: YOUNG PEOPLE –
TEACHERS – PARENTS ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ENTOMOLOGY!!!!**
THE MISSISSIPPI STATE ENTOMOLOGY DEPARTMENT PRESENTS:
Entomology Camp #1 on June 19-23 – Wood Institute - Mathiston
Entomology Camp #2 – July 17-21 - Kings Arrow Ranch –Lumberton

This camp is for **adults and youth** (over age 10) who want to learn about insects from experts. The camp will be taught by professors from the Entomology Department at Mississippi State, and will be educational and fun!!!!

- _ Learn how to collect, identify, and preserve insects!
- _ Learn about unique critters you've never seen, yet they live all around you!
- _ Make an insect collection with help from the experts!

Adults are encouraged to enroll for the camp!!! Out of state campers are also welcome!!!!
Enrollment is limited and will be on a first come basis.

Mail individual applications along with **\$50.00 deposit** to reserve your place to:

Entomology Camp
MSU Entomology Department
Box 9775
Mississippi State, MS 39762

5 day Entomology Camp costs : \$150.00

Charges include room/board, t-shirt and miscellaneous supplies - deposit is not refundable after May 1, 2005 for camp #1 and June 15, 2005 for camp #2, deposit is applied to camp costs.

I will be attending CAMP Session #_____. Indicate 1 or 2, please!

Indicate t-shirt size: Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XL _____ Other _____
All shirt sizes are measured in adult sizes, the vendor does not handle children's sizes

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Telephone _____ email _____

email address is very helpful in quick communication

4-H rules and guidelines apply.

Please submit a **separate copy of this form for each camper** - be sure to indicate the session the camper will be attending.

Certification of health is required - so camp physicals are in order



4-h entomology service
project
2005

Mr. Ron Brister, Curator of the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, has requested assistance in creating a teaching collection for the insect portion of the museum. They need pinned insect specimens. Many of our 4-Hers have `extras' and a few might even be willing to donate entire collections which are no longer in use.

As a service project we thought it would be good to make the suggestion to our 4-Hers and begin assembling the insect specimens for delivery to the Pink Palace.

Insects should be pinned on standard insect pins. It would be good if they had date, locality and common name labels, but that is not absolutely essential.

We would like to collect the donations during Project Achievement Day activities. Agents and volunteers can put the word out and bring the donations to the PAD. We will place them in the boxes Mr. Brister has supplied and then during the last week in June deliver them to the Memphis Pink Palace.

Be sure the donor's name, address and county are included with the specimens.

Questions?

**Contact Dr. Mike Williams – 662-325-2986
or via email – mikew@ext.msstate.edu**

