

Activity 11: Where Are They?



Before you can begin to control insect pests, you need to find out what insects are present, where they are, and determine if the problem is big or small. In this activity you survey in and around your home for insect pests.



Finding Insects

Tool Kit

- Flashlight
- Pencil
- Insect Pest Inventory data sheet

- Look carefully both inside and outside your home for insect pests. Only list insect pests. (For example, people are happy to have a monarch

butterfly on their bushes outside the house and do not want to control them, so they're not considered pests.)

- Look for signs of insect activity, such as holes in leaves, webs, anthills, tunnels, dead insects, live insects, and wood damage.
- Decide whether it's a big problem (you have to do something about it) or a small problem (you can live with it).
- Record your findings in the Insect Pest Inventory data sheet below or make your own.

Insect Pest Inventory

Location	Insects Found/Signs of Insect Activity	Problem Level	
		Big	Small



Dig Deeper

- Discuss control measures for the insect pests that you find with a helper.
- Learn how to use insects to make a collection at www.4-H.org/curriculum/entomology.

Insect Facts – Biological Control

Some insects are pests because they eat the foods we eat and live in places where we live. Some pest insects feed on humans and other animals. It is important to control insect pests without doing damage to the environment. Entomologists have developed many tools to control insects. Biological control uses other living things to control insects. Some of the major biological control agents are listed in the table.

Method of Control	Biological Control Agents Used
Predators	Lady beetles, ground beetles, mites, dragonflies, mantids, assassin bugs, robber flies, blister beetles,rove beetles, checkered beetles, blister beetles, velvet ants, spiders, lacewings, ants, damsel bugs, stink bugs, minute pirate bugs, flower flies, marsh flies, hunting wasps
Parasites	Ichneumon, braconids, chalcids, tachnid flies, humpbacked flies
Pathogens	Bacteria, fungi, viruses, protozoans

Life Skills

ENTOMOLOGY SKILL: Determining the scope of an insect pest problem.

SCIENCE STANDARD: Making observations.

SUCCESS INDICATOR: Identifies insect pests and level of problem.

Talk It Over

SHARE WHAT HAPPENED: Where did you see the most insects or signs of insect activity?

APPLY: What non-chemical control measures could help reduce insect pest populations?

GENERALIZE TO YOUR LIFE: Why is it important to take an inventory before tackling a problem?

FACT!

Nearly 17% of the human population suffers from allergies to cockroaches and the house dust mite.