Insect Fact and Fiction

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Insects are intertwined with myths and misconceptions

Myths: Dragonflies are spirits of rice

Misinformation: Ticks jump from trees

Misunderstandings: who’s the best pollinator?
Purpose of the Presentation

Goals:
  • Useful information
  • Interesting information
  • Pollinators and non-Pollinators
    • Bees
    • Milkweed/Butterflies
    • ‘Other’
Bees, Wasps, and Hornets: What’s in a name?

Bumble Bees
- Fuzzy
- Round(er)
- Less aggressive
- Pollinators

Wasps - Vespidae
- Includes all Yellow Jackets and Hornets
- Slim waist
- Aggressive
- Predators

Hornets (genus Vespa)
- Small subset of wasps
- Not native to North America
- Baldfaced hornet is actually a type of yellowjacket (Dolichovespula/Vespula)
Bee and Wasp Stings

Is it true some bees can only sting once?

HONEY BEE STINGS
• Barbed stingers
• Can only sting a human once

WASP AND BUMBLE BEE STINGS
• Relatively smooth stingers
• Can sting multiple times
Leave my house alone!

Carpenter bees – how much damage are they really doing?
• Usually not as bad as it looks (but sometimes it is)
Leave my house alone!

So how do I get rid of them?

• Plug holes to discourage continued nesting
• Paint/finish exposed wood
• Pesticide use is always last step in IPM approach
Battle of the Best Pollinator

Are butterflies the best pollinators?
Milkweed Communities

Do only monarchs use milkweed?
Milkweed Communities

Do only monarchs use milkweed?

- Milkweed Tussock Moth
- Milkweed Longhorn Beetle
- Eastern Comma Butterfly
Insect Migration - 3,000 Miles

Do only monarchs migrate?

Monarch butterfly – *Danaus plexippus*
Insect Migration - 2,500 Miles

Do only monarchs migrate?

Painted Lady – *Vanessa cardui*
Insect Migration - 11,200 Miles

Do only monarchs migrate?

Wandering glider – *Pantala flavescens*
Do ticks jump? Fly?

- No! They always start low and move up.
So many facts, so little time

Questions?
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