

Basic Insect Classification

Order	Common names	Wings	Mouth-parts	Usual # of tarsal segments	Metamorphosis	Usual size	Where usually found
Protura	Proturans	None	Sucking	1	Simple	Minute	In debris
Thysanura	Bristletails	None	Chewing	1-5	Simple	Medium	In debris, buildings
Collembola	Springtails	None	Chewing	1	Simple	Minute	In debris
Ephemeroptera	Mayflies	4 (rarely 2); HW small	Vestigial	3-5	Simple; nymphs aquatic	Medium	Near water
Odonata	Dragonflies and damselflies	4; many-veined; HW as large as FW	Chewing	3	Simple; nymphs aquatic	Large	Near water
Orthoptera	Grasshoppers, crickets, cockroaches, mantids, walking sticks	0-4; narrow and thickened; HW folded fanwise	Chewing	3-5	Simple	Large	On ground or vegetation
Isoptera	Termites	0-4; FW and HW similar in size	Chewing	4	Simple	Small	In ground or wood
Plecoptera	Stoneflies	4; FW narrow; HW with a large anal lobe	Chewing	3	Simple; nymphs aquatic	Medium	Near water
Dermaptera	Earwigs	0-4; FW short and thickened; HW folded	Chewing	3	Simple	Medium to small	In debris
Embioptera	Web spinners	0-4; HW a little smaller than FW	Chewing	3	Simple	Small	In debris
Psocoptera	Booklice and barklice	0-4; HW smaller than FW	Chewing	2-3	Simple	Small to minute	In debris, buildings
Zoraptera	Zorapterans	0-4; HW smaller	Chewing	2	Simple	Minute	In debris
Mallophaga	Chewing lice	None	Chewing	1-2	Simple	Minute	On birds or mammals

Anoplura	Sucking lice	None	Sucking	1	Simple	Minute	On mammals
Thysanoptera	Thrips	0-4; wings long, narrow, fringed	Rasping-sucking	1-2	Intermediate between simple and complex	Minute	In debris or on vegetation
Hemiptera	Bugs	0-4; FW thickened at base	Sucking	2-3	Simple	Medium	On debris, on vegetation, on or in water
Homoptera	Cicadas, hoppers, whiteflies, aphids, scale insects	0-4; FW membranous or thickened, uniform in texture	Sucking	1-3	Simple	Minute to large	On vegetation
Neuroptera	Dobson flies, fishflies, alderflies, lace wings, antlions	4; many-veined; HW as large as FW	Chewing	5	Complete	Medium to large	On vegetation, often near water
Coleoptera	Beetles	0-4; FW thickened and veinless; HW membranous and folded	Chewing	3-5	Complete	Minute to large	All habitats
Strepsiptera	Twisted-wing parasites	0-2 (FW clublike); HW fanlike; only male with wings	Vestigial	2-5	Complete, with hypermetamorphosis	Minute	In other insects, chiefly bees and hoppers (Homoptera)
Mecoptera	Scorpionflies	0-4; FW and HW about same size	Chewing; beaklike	5	Complete	Medium	On vegetation
Trichoptera	Caddis flies	4; hairy	Chewing; reduced	5	Complete; larvae aquatic	Small to medium	Near water
Lepidoptera	Butterflies and moths	0-4; scaly	Sucking, with coiled proboscis	5	Complete	Minute to large	On vegetation
Diptera	Flies	0-2 (HW reduced to halteres)	Sucking	5	Complete	Minute to large	On vegetation
Siphonaptera	Fleas	None	Sucking	5	Complete	Minute	On birds or mammals
Hymenoptera	Sawflies, ichneumons, chalcids, ants, wasps, bees	0-4; HW smaller than FW	Chewing, chewing-sucking	5	Complete	Minute to large	On ground or vegetation

*FW, fore wings; HW, hind wings

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