

# Animals of the World: Insects



## THE PRAYING MANTIS



The praying mantis is a fascinating and intriguing insect of the animal kingdom. It gets its name from its front legs joining in such a way that it seems to be praying.

There are many subspecies of praying mantis, but the most widespread in North America is the European praying mantis. Another well-known mantis is the Chinese religious mantis; its size can reach 12 centimeters and is the largest within its family.

The origin of the praying mantis is in Europe and Asia, but in recent years it has been introduced in North America and Latin America. Their favorite habitats are fields and grasslands where they can hide among the grasses, leaves, and branches of the trees.

Typically, the praying mantis measures between four and five centimeters, but they can reach 12 centimeters, depending on the species. They have a long thorax, a large head with large slanted eyes, and thin antennae. Females are much larger than males.



Its color varies from green, yellow, and brown with different shades. Their coloration is determined by the surrounding environment. If you live in an area with lots of branches, the mantis adopts a brown color in its next molt. If you live in a place with a predominance of herbs, it adopts a green or yellow color in its next molt. This helps it to camouflage in its surroundings.



Its long front legs, which come together in a praying position, have spines that help it capture its prey.

The praying mantis is a carnivorous insect that feeds on other insects and animals, such as flies, grasshoppers, crickets, even small amphibians, and reptiles. It is a patient hunter that can wait for hours for her prey to pass, then attacking it with a devastating blow. Larger mantises are capable of eating small birds, such as hummingbirds.



They have a highly developed auditory and visual system. It helps them locate their prey before it even gets close to their sharp legs. Their ears capture many more sounds than the human ear, and their eyes can see in three dimensions, unlike many other insects.

They are solitary animals that join groups only during the mating season. When several males find a female, they fight each other until only one survives. Some female praying mantis cut off the male's head to eat after mating, which ensures the survival of their offspring.

When a female manages to mate, she spawns hundreds of eggs at each laying. The young mantis is the same as the adult, except smaller in size. They can live up to one year, in optimal conditions.

Many people think that praying mantises are dangerous to humans because they have some type of poison in their legs. This is false. The mantis is not lethal to humans, but they can cut the skin with their sharp legs.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# THE PRAYING MANTIS



1. After reading the text, which most closely resembles a praying mantis?

- a. a fly
- b. an insect praying
- c. a small amphibian
- d. a reptile

2. The size of the praying mantis depends on the species, but can be \_\_\_\_\_

- a. 4 centimeters.
- b. 5 centimeters.
- c. 32 centimeters.
- d. 12 centimeters.



3. The European praying mantis is the largest in the world, bigger than the Chinese.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Match each part of the body of the praying mantis with the correct adjective.

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| a. Head    | 1. Elongated |
| b. Chest   | 2. Torn      |
| c. Antenna | 3. Large     |
| d. Eyes    | 4. Thin      |

5. Why is it important that the praying mantis be able to adapt the color of its skin to the color of the surrounding environment?

- a. They can hide and avoid predators.
- b. They follow the fashion trend in the place where they live.
- c. They can change color and not always have the same skin color.
- d. The color green is the color of nature.

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6. What would happen if you took the praying mantis out of its habitat and put it in an empty pink plastic box in your house?

- a. As long as I feed it leftovers of my food, it will live.
- b. It will die because it doesn't have the right conditions to live.
- c. It can become my pet and play with my other pets.
- d. It would change color to match the color of the box.

7. With their hind legs, they hunt prey that they will eat later.

- a. True
- b. False



8. The praying mantis \_\_\_\_\_

- a. is mainly vegetarian.
- b. eats a varied diet, including eggs of other insects.
- c. is carnivorous.
- d. eats herbs and roots in some seasons and eats insects and animals in other seasons.

9. Comparing the senses of the praying mantis with those of human beings, we can say that \_\_\_\_\_

- a. its ears are more developed, but not its sight.
- b. its eyes are more developed, but not its ears.
- c. both sight and smell are highly developed.
- d. its ears are very developed, and it can see in three dimensions.



10. The praying mantis is dangerous \_\_\_\_\_

- a. because it has toxic poison in its limbs.
- b. because it cuts off the head of its young once it has mated.
- c. because it is an impatient hunter and attacks without waiting.
- d. This statement is wrong because it doesn't pose a danger to humans.