

FFA CONTEST INSECT DESCRIPTIONS

NOTE: Notice that the words "usually, typically, often", etc. are used in many of the descriptions. That means with any insect (or group of insects), there will be specimens that don't exactly fit the typical description.

ANOPLURA

Hog Louse - Length 1/8 – 3/16 inch. Body round, flat, wingless. Narrow head and thorax. Large claws.

BLATTODEA

American Cockroach – Brown, flat body, wings cover the abdomen. Length 2 - 3 inches.

Brown-Banded Cockroach – Light brown, flat body, length ca. 1/2 inch. Brownish band across upper part of wings.

German Cockroach – Light brown, flat body, length ca. 1/2 inch. Two dark longitudinal stripes on thorax.

Oriental Cockroach – Dark brown or black body, flat, length ca. 1 - 2 inches. Usually wingless but if winged, wings do not completely cover abdomen.

Pennsylvania Wood Cockroach – Dark brown, flat body, length ca. 1 inch. Outer margin of thorax and upper wing light in color. Remaining wing margin somewhat clear.

COLEOPTERA

Alfalfa Weevil - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Brown, with a downward projecting beak. A V-shaped, dark brown mark on the back of its elytra (hard, first pair of wings; one wing is an elytron), the point of the "V" away from the insect's head.

Bean Leaf Beetle - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Longish red, yellow or tan body. Typical pattern on the elytra is a black band around the outer margin, four dots, and a triangle at the top (toward the thorax). Can be found with parts of the pattern missing: some may only have the triangle. Long antennae.

Blister Beetle - Soft elytra that goes down around the sides of the insect, giving it a cylindrical appearance. Thorax is generally narrower than the head. Common colors are black, gray, gray with black margins, brown with black stripes.

Boll Weevil – Length ca. 1/4 inch. Brown, grayish or reddish brown, with a downward projecting beak. Hairy body. Light stripe on thorax running front to back.

Carpet Beetle - Small, round, hairy beetle with mottled coloring.

Carrion Beetle - Dark color, somewhat flat, with pitted elytra. Thorax can be orange, black or yellow with black dot.

Click Beetle - Usually dull in color with a long body. Back corners of thorax pointed. Various sizes.

Colorado Potato Beetle - Length ca. 3/8 inch. Round with several length-wise stripes on elytra.

Elm Leaf Beetle - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Brown with small brown "dash" at the top of each elytron. Long antennae.

Flea Beetle - Hind leg has a large femur (for jumping). Can be striped or solid in color. Various sizes.

Flour Beetle - Small, length less than 1/4 inch. Brown with cylindrically-shaped body.

Green June Beetle - Large, stout-bodied, somewhat flatten on top. Green with brown on the side.

Ground Beetle - Generally a stout body, somewhat flat, elongate, dark brown or black. May have fine lines (made up of pits) running length-wise on elytra. Thorax may have different shapes. Large "ball" (trochanter) at the top of the hind femur. Various sizes.

Japanese Beetle - Stocky, copper-colored elytra with shiny green thorax. White dots on side of abdomen.

Ladybird Beetle - Various colors and sizes. May have pattern (usually dots) on elytra and/or thorax. Short antennae.

Lightningbug (Firefly) - Soft elytra that lie flat over the body. Thorax covers the head.

Long-Horned Beetle - Most long-bodied, cylindrical, antennae typically (though not always) longer than the insect's body. Eyes usually wrap around the base of the antenna (therefore are not round). Can be solid color or patterned. Various sizes.

Metallic Wood-Boring Beetle - Shiny, long to oval-shaped body. "Tail" typically pointed.

Mexican Bean Beetle - Round, yellow to tan color. Dot pattern on each elytron front to back is three, three, two.

Northern Corn Rootworm - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Longish body, solid green to tan in color. Long antennae.

Rice Weevil - Length 1/8 to 3/16 inch. Black, with a downward projecting beak. Usually two large, reddish spots on each elytron (may be merged together to form a lengthwise thick stripe).

Rove Beetle - Generally long and slender body, brown and/or black in color. Very short elytra, usually not longer than the width of the two wings combined. Long antennae. Various sizes.

Saw-Toothed Grain Beetle - Small, ca. 1/8 inch in length. Brown, slightly flattened body. Sides of thorax "toothed."

Soldier Beetle - Soft elytra that lies flat over the body. Thorax around same width as head. Thorax and elytra are usually orange, yellow, red, sometimes black. Sometimes black marks on the wings. Somewhat long antennae.

Southern Corn Rootworm - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Longish body, red, yellow or tan in color. Dot pattern on each elytron front to back is two, two, two. Long antennae.

Tiger Beetle - Leggy, large eyes, narrow thorax, large jaws. Elytra plain or with pattern. Various colors.

Western Corn Rootworm - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Longish body, green to tan in color. Three black stripes lengthwise on the elytra (may blend together) with a light spot on the end of each elytron. Long antennae.

DERMAPTERA

Earwig - Long, somewhat flat body, may have short wings. Large “pincers” on end of abdomen.

DIPTERA

Green Bottle Fly - Typical fly-shaped body, shiny green or blue.

Horse Fly - When at rest, wings make a triangular shape. Head triangular shape from above, appears to be mostly eyes. Usually a dull color.

House Fly - Typical fly-shaped body. Thorax gray and black striped.

Mosquito - Slender, usually hump-backed, body with long legs. Long sucking mouthparts.

Moth Fly - Small, hump back, very hairy, with oval-shaped, somewhat pointed wings generally held over the body.

Robber Fly - Long abdomen. Large eyes with pit between them. Long legs held under body like a basket. Usually gray or brown.

Syrphid Fly (Flower Fly) - A bee mimic, usually with a black and yellow striped abdomen. Flattened abdomen.

Tachinid Fly - Typically fly-shaped body. End of abdomen bristly. Various sizes.

EPHEMEROPTERA

Mayfly - Long, fragile looking body. One or two pairs of triangular shaped wings that have many veins. Two or three long cerci on the tail. Very short antennae. Various sizes.

HEMIPTERA

Assassin Bug - Very short, stout beak, tip ending at or just before front legs. Head narrower than thorax. Various body shapes and colors.

Boxelder Bug - Black with red markings. Long beak.

Brown Stink Bug - Shield shaped, brown color.

Chinch Bug - Length ca. 1/8 inch. Black and white pattern.

Damsel Bug - Delicate looking, light brown/gray patterned body. Length ca. 1/2 inch. Long beak.

Giant Water Bug - Brown, stocky body with short beak. Front legs raptorial, usually held in front of body with "elbows" to the outside. One to three inches in length (MO species).

Green Stink Bug - Shield shaped, green color.

Harlequin Bug - Shield shaped, red and black or yellow and black color pattern.

Lace Bug - Small, wings pitted, giving a lace-like appearance.

Minute Pirate Bug - Length ca. 1/16 inch. Black and white pattern.

Squash Bug - Long, slender beak that goes between front legs. Brown body. Black and orange striped pattern around edge of membranous part of wings.

Tarnished Plant Bug - Length ca. 1/4 inch. Mottled brown color. Wing has bent appearance.

Water Strider - Body black or dark brown, either round or spindle-shaped. Very long legs.

HOMOPTERA

Cicada - Length ca. 1 to 3 inches (MO specimens). Long, clear wings held tent-like over the body. Large eyes.

Leafhopper - Length typically 1/8 to 1/2 inch. Long wings held tent-like over the body. Triangle-shaped head. Color variable.

Mealybug - Small, oval-shaped body. In life covered with white powder. Pinned may have pink tinge.

Treehopper - Thorax modified into various shapes and extends over the abdomen. Body size variable.

HYMENOPTERA

Ant - Medium build. Elbowed antennae. Narrow waist has one or two “bumps”. May or may not have wings.

Bald-faced Hornet - Stocky body with narrow waist. Black with white/creamy markings. Wings often folded lengthwise.

Bumble Bee - Hairy, stocky body with narrow waist. Usually black with yellow markings.

Carpenter Bee - Stocky body with narrow waist. Hairy except for abdomen which is typically shiny blue/black. Can have yellow markings.

Honey Bee - Hairy, stocky body with narrow waist. Usually light brown with darker markings.

Horntail - Thick waist. Long, cylinder-shaped body. May have two (looks like one) medium length cerci at end of abdomen. Color variable.

Ichneumon Wasp - Thin, long body with narrow waist. Abdomen usually flat side to side. Long antennae. May have long ovipositor on tail. Various colors and sizes.

Mud Dauber Wasp - Waist is long, up to 1/4 inch. Typically blue/black or patterned. Usually around 1 inch in length.

Velvet Ant - Ant-like in appearance, waist without bumps. Body hairy, color usually red and black. May or may not have wings.

Yellowjacket - Stocky body with narrow waist. Black with yellow markings. Wings often folded lengthwise.

ISOPTERA

Termite - Body black with thick waist, ca. 1/4 inch in length (MO species). Wings clear/whitish, lie flat over body and extend far past end of abdomen.

LEPIDOPTERA

Alfalfa Butterfly - Wing span typically 2 inches. Usually yellow with black border on edge of both front and back wings.

Bagworm Larva (In Bag) - bag constructed of plant material.

Black Cutworm Moth - Wing span ca. 1.5 - 2 inches. Dark color, with a black “dagger” pattern in the front wing. Black “eyebrows” on the front of the thorax.

Buckeye Butterfly - Wing span typically 2 inches. Brown with six eyespots.

Cabbage Butterfly - Wing span typically less than 2 inches. Usually white with one black dot on each wing. Tips of front wing black.

Cabbage Looper - Wing span typically less than 1.5 inches. Brown with small, shiny "circles" in front wing.

Codling Moth - Wing span ca. 3/4 inch. Grayish with outer portion of front wing dark.

Corn Earworm Moth - Wing span ca. 1.5 - 2 inches. Light, yellowish brown, may have green tones. Light banding in front wing. Hind wing has dark band.

European Corn Borer Moth - Wing span ca. 1 inch. Light brown, delicate, with squiggly lines in front wings.

Forage Looper Moth - Wing span ca. 1.5 - 2 inches. Brown, with two dark bands on each front wing.

Indian Meal Moth - Wing span ca. 3/4 inch. Light brown with outer portion of front wing a darker reddish brown.

Luna Moth – Large, pale green with “tails” on hind wings.

Monarch Butterfly - Orange with black veins.

Peachtree Borer Moth - Wing span ca. 1 inch. Hind wings clear. Front wings clear in female, black (scales) in male. Male has orange band across abdomen.

Tent Caterpillar Moth – Wing span 1 to 1.5 inches. Light brown with two white lines on each front wing. Broken white line on edge of front wing.

Tiger Moth - Usually patterned and very brightly colored. Various sizes.

Tiger Swallowtail - Large with “tail” on the hind wing. Usually black and yellow. Some females black.

Tobacco Hornworm Moth - Wing span 4 - 5 inches. Pointed wings and body. Abdomen with yellow dots on sides.

True Armyworm Moth - Wing span ca. 1.5 - 2 inches. Brown with one small white dot in each front wing. Hind wing with indistinct band.

Underwing Moth - Front wings patterned to resemble tree bark. Hind wing may have bright stripes.

Viceroy Butterfly - Orange with black veins. Black line running through hind wing.

White-lined Sphinx - Wing span 3 - 4 inches. Pointed wings and body. Front wing with white line.

MANTODEA

Praying Mantis - Long thin body, green and/or brown, winged with raptorial front legs. Triangular shaped head.

MECOPTERA

Scorpionfly - Long body and face, patterned wings. Male has scorpion-like tail.

NEUROPTERA

Dobsonfly - Length usually over 3 inches. Drab brown with many veins in wings. Stout jaws. Male has long tusks.

Green Lacewing - Length ca. 1 inch. Green (may be faded to brown), rounded wings with many veins.

ODONATA

Damselfly - Delicate. Wings narrow at base. When at rest, wings held over abdomen.

Dragonfly - Stocky. Wings thicker at base. When at rest, wings held out to the sides of the body, like an airplane.

ORTHOPTERA

Camel Cricket - Length ca. 1 - 2 inches. Brown, humped back, wingless. Long legs. Jumping hind legs.

Differential Grasshopper - Length ca. 1.5 - 2 inches. Stocky, brown, short antennae. Jumping hind legs with chevron pattern.

Field Cricket - Length ca. 1 - 1.5 inches. Stocky, black somewhat flattened body, jumping hind legs.

Long-Horned Grasshopper - Green, long antennae, jumping hind legs. Various sizes.

Mole Cricket - Length ca. 1.5 inches. Brown, somewhat flattened body, front legs made for digging.

Red-Legged Grasshopper - Body length ca. 1 inch. Stocky, brown, short antennae. Jumping hind legs, slender part of leg (tibia) red.

PHASMATODEA

Walkingstick - Long sticklike body, long, walking legs. MO species wingless.

PLECOPTERA

Stonefly - Long, flattish body. with the wings held flat over the body. Two short cerci on tail. Short antennae.

SIPHONAPTERA

Flea - Length 1/16 - 1/8 inch. Body flat side to side, wingless with "moustache."

TRICHOPTERA

Caddisfly - Usually brown. Long antennae, no cerci. Hairy wings held tentlike over body. Various sizes.