

Insects & arachnids

For every human, there are an estimated **1.4 billion insects** alive right now



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Most venomous spider

The Brazilian wandering spiders of the genus *Phoneutria* are highly venomous, particularly the Brazilian huntsman (*P. fera*), which has the most active neurotoxic venom of any living spider. Just 0.006 mg of its venom is sufficient to kill a mouse.

Fastest insect

A speed of 3.36 mph (5.4 km/h), or 50 body lengths per sec, was registered by *Periplaneta americana*, the familiar American cockroach of the order Dictyoptera, in 1991.

The **fastest caterpillar** is the larva of the mother-of-pearl moth (*Pleuroptya ruralis*), which can travel at 0.8 mph (1.37 km/h).

The **fastest flying insect** is the Australian dragonfly (*Austrophlebia costalis*), at 36 mph (58 km/h) in short bursts. In 1917, a ground velocity of 61.3 mph (98.6 km/h) was recorded over 240–270 ft (73–82 m).

Actual
Size

Least classifiable insect

A newly discovered nymph (juvenile) form of plant hopper resembles nymphs from at least four taxonomic families but has defied classification. It was found in the rain forest of southeastern Suriname.



Most toxic insect venom

Pogonomyrmex maricopa is a stinging species of harvester ant native to Arizona, USA. The LD₅₀ value of its venom (the dosage required to kill 50% of mice subjected to it) is 0.0000019 oz/lb when injected intravenously into mice.

Actual
Size

Loudest insect

The African cicada (*Breviana brevis*), discovered in 1850, produces a calling song with a mean sound pressure level of 106.7 decibels at a distance of 1 ft 7 in (50 cm). Songs play a vital role in cicada communication and reproduction.

Most times for an insect to molt

All insects molt several times during the course of their lifetime. Up to 60 molts have been

Longest insect tongue

recorded for the firebrat (*Thermobia domestica*), a primitive, wingless insect that is widely distributed in North America and other temperate regions worldwide. The firebrat molts throughout its life, whereas most insects do so only during their juvenile (nymph, or larval) stage.



Largest appetite relative to weight

The caterpillar of the North American silk moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*) eats more food relative to its own body weight than any other animal. Living on the leaves of oak, birch, willow, and maple trees, it eats up to 86,000 times its own weight during the first 56 days of its life.



Largest ant

The wingless queen of the fulvous driver ant *Dorylus fulvus* is native to South Africa. It grows to a maximum length of 1.9 in (5 cm), some 0.7 in (2 cm) longer than the male of the species. The term "fulvous" describes the ant's characteristic tawny brown coloration.

Actual
Size

OUTSIZE INSECTS, CENTIPEDES, AND ARACHNIDS

Fulvous driver ant (wingless queen): length 1.9 in



Titan beetle:
body length 5.9 in

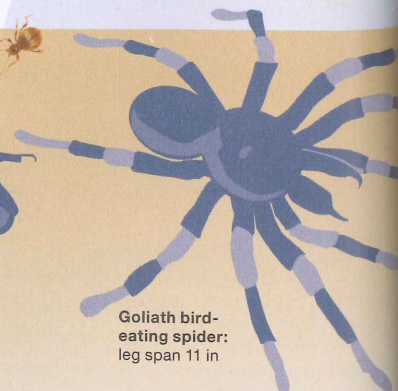


Giant centipede:
length 10.2 in

Hercules beetle: length
including horns 6.6 in



Giant water bug:
length 4.5 in



Goliath bird-eating spider:
leg span 11 in

Chan's megastick:
length 13.9 in