



What makes an Insect,

an Insect?

An insect is an animal that has a hard outer covering called the exoskeleton, six legs, three body parts; the abdomen, the thorax and head.

Insects are all around us, on land, underground, in trees and plants, in fresh water and salty water, in snow and ice. Insects can eat just about anything, some eat raw meat, some eat fruit and some eat vegetables. Some gnaw away through a dead tree or a log on the ground. Some drink the nectar from flowers and some even drink your blood. They are everywhere!

Insects are central to many ecological processes, in natural and ecological ecosystem. They play an important role in recycling nutrients and provide food for many other animals. Some insects are pests destroying crops, transmitting diseases, or damaging buildings. There are many insects that are of great benefit to us, medicinal use, controlling other insect numbers, controlling weeds.

While insects are, everywhere, it is only a small amount of insects that we actually encounter. For the most they are just doing their life cycle out of sight.

Insects shed their exoskeleton (old skin) a number of times in order to grow to full capacity. Each time an insect sheds its exoskeleton it grows in size. The number of times an insect will do a moult (remove old exoskeleton) is varied between insect species.