

TEXAS CONNECTION

Activity #3

Peppermint Beetle



Extra Resources

The Nature Writers of Texas
Daddy Longlegs are Common in Summer
<http://texasnature.blogspot.com/2005/07/daddy-longlegs-are-common-in-summer-by.html>

University of California, Riverside
Spider Research
<http://spiders.ucr.edu/daddylonglegs.html>

Burke Museum
Spider Myths
<http://www.burkemuseum.org/spidermyth/myths/daddylonglegs.html>

Backyard Nature
www.backyardnature.net/longlegs.htm

Texas Overview

The sense of smell is important when animals — like the “Peppermint Beetle” — try to follow others of their kind. It also is important when animals are in trouble.

Sometimes, animals give off smells as warnings. Most people know skunks do this, spraying animals that bother them. There also are several members of the bug world that do the same thing.

Daddy Long Legs (*Leiobunum townsendi*) are a good example. Also referred to as Harvestmen because their numbers increase during harvest time, this common Arachnid can be found in the parts of Texas where limestone is most often found.

Unlike spiders, Harvestmen do not have fangs or venom nor do they spin silk. They have one body part with eight long legs extending from it and two eyes atop their body. If you try to catch one, it sometimes will drop a leg.

Harvestmen are omnivores. They are not picky eaters. Rather, they will eat almost anything. They act as decomposers eating dead things but they also eat live plants, snails, worms and small bugs.

You can find these interesting and sometimes nocturnal Arachnids living under limestone ledges, rocks and roofs. They also sometimes can be found living in your home.



Photo by Elizabeth Sellers

When under attack, Harvestmen like to gather in large groups and pulse up and down. When they feel threatened, they emit an unpleasant smell designed to scare off the attackers.

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