

Especially for young readers



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The Insect Zoo is Crawling with People!

Is That Thing Really Real?



This tarantula will move about at night but it is very still during the daytime. At the zoo, it is fed crickets. In nature, it eats many different kinds of insects. The Smithsonian's Insect Zoo is the only permanent zoo of its kind in the country.

Photos courtesy The Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

Yes! Although that tarantula at the left is so still it looks like a model, it is very much alive.

It is under glass at the special Insect Zoo at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History in Washington, D. C.

The Insect Zoo is not just about insects. It is about insects and their relatives. The whole clan can be lumped into one group called arthropods (ar-thro-pods).

Arthropods are easy to spot.

They have outside skeletons or shell-like body walls.

Their bodies are divided into parts.

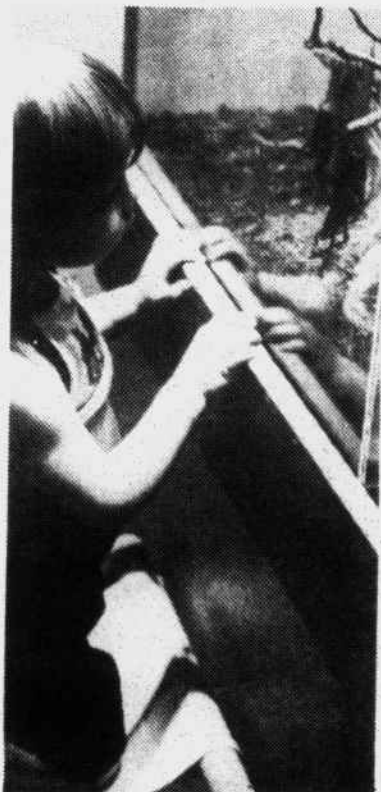
They have pairs of legs that are jointed. There is padding between each joint.

One side of their body looks just like the other side.

Arthropods are very hardy. They have been around for more than 400 million years.

There are more of them than any other kind of animal. They make up nearly 80% of the animal kingdom.

So you don't have to visit a zoo to see them...but many people do.



The insects are in glass terrariums. Since insects do not live very long, the displays change often.



Sometimes zoo keepers take harmless insects out of their cages so visitors can hold them. This is an Eastern Lubber grasshopper.



The zoo is arranged so visitors can sit down and really get a close look.



Would you like to hold a millipede? This exhibit hopes to show that insects are not just pests, but friends to man.