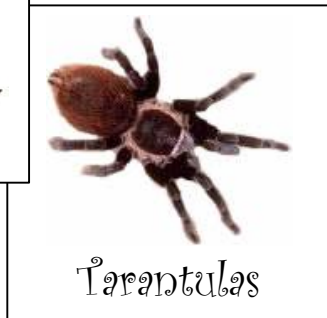
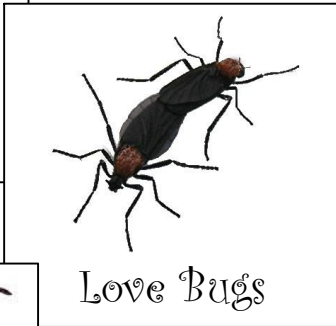
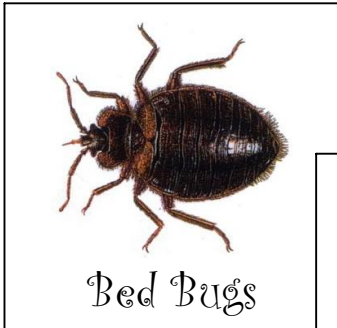


Arthropod Fact or Fiction



I know this time of the year you are all very busy. I am also pretty sure you will be looking for some fun activities to help your students decompress. One fun activity is to explore arthropod facts and fiction. Arthropods are part of our everyday lives in Alabama, and there are many urban myths surrounding them.

You can have your students do an internet search for answers to the following questions. This activity is great for teaching students how to find legitimate websites versus unreliable sites. You may suggest they look on sites that have the .edu or .gov suffix. Let's see how well you do with the questions below!

Arthropod FACT or FICTION

1. *Bedbugs are only a fairytale from a children's rhyme.*
2. *Scorpions have the ability to glow.*
3. *Tarantulas are deadly to humans.*
4. *Lovebugs were engineered at the University of Florida.*

Answers

Bedbugs are only a fairytale from a children's rhyme.

Nope. Bedbugs are real and are a true bug in the order Hemiptera. They are wingless and have piercing/sucking mouthparts that they use to feed on warm blooded animals including humans. Their feeding may leave the host with red itchy bumps but, lucky for us, bedbugs are not known to transmit disease.

A tell-tale sign of a bedbug infestation is the black or dark red spotting seen on sheets and mattresses where the suckers have been feeding on their sleeping host. *Yuck!*

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Few bugs are bad! More than 95% of all insect species are beneficial to humans.

Answers (continued)

Scorpions have the ability to glow.

It's true. Scorpions can glow. Scorpions have a protein coating on their cuticle that will fluoresce under ultraviolet light. Scientists are not sure why the scorpions have developed this talent.

It is possible that it is a form of communication helping mates find each other under the moonlight. Sounds romantic, but scorpion mating is a pretty dangerous affair . . . well, at least to the male. Some scorpions glow bright green-blue or bright green-yellow. They can even fluoresce after death. How cool is that?

Tarantulas are deadly to humans.

Though venomous, tarantulas are not "deadly" to humans. Tarantulas feed by injecting an enzyme into their prey, usually birds, insects, or rodents, which dissolves the tissue so they can feed on the cellular fluid (a mouse slushy . . . *gross*).

When injected into humans, this enzyme causes pain and swelling, but not death. In fact, there have been no substantiated reports of fatalities from tarantula bites.

Lovebugs were engineered at the University of Florida.

Not a lot of love is given to the lovebug. The lovebugs that are such a nuisance to motorists in Florida were documented as swarming in southern Louisiana in the 1920s, and were described in Texas in 1940.

Yep, that was before genetic engineering was really possible. Since 1940, our dear lovebug has moved eastward throughout the Gulf States and into Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. These lovestruck bugs seem enamored with Florida and southern parts of Alabama. Actually, lovebugs have been collected in Escambia County, FL (north-western Florida), since 1949!

As far as their potential for feeding on mosquitoes, that is fiction as well. The lovebug larvae feed on decaying plant material and the adults feed on nectar. Sorry Auburn, Alabama and Florida State fans, but lovebugs were not developed by University of Florida!

IPM News!

Integrated Pest Management for Sports Turf

ATTN: Athletic Directors, Coaches, Ag Teachers & anyone who maintains athletic fields.

We have a clinic designed exclusively for you **APRIL 30th** on sports turf management! Come hear how to effectively implement an IPM program for your sports fields. The clinic will include a full-day of sports turfcare, a soil sample of your sports field, snacks, lunch and a tour of Auburn University's athletic fields. **Registration is limited to the first 100 attendees—so register today!** For details go to: http://www.ag.auburn.edu/enpl/schoolipm/documents/pm_sport



Auburn University School IPM Site is Here!

We've been working with a webmaster to update the existing school IPM site and expand the AU website to include a variety of IPM resources for school folks. The major overhaul is completed and we hope you will be sure to check in on us from time to time.



Our site is:

<http://ag.auburn.edu/enpl/schoolipm>

and this and other pest presses are posted at:

<http://ag.auburn.edu/enpl/schoolipm/pestpress>

Information credits for this issue of Pest Press

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