

Love-A-Bug

This badge was designed to help Junior Girl Scouts discover the wonderful world of insects and bugs living in Orange County. By researching and closely examining several types of insects and bugs, it is hoped girls will learn to appreciate the important part that these animals play in the delicate balance of our environment.

8 of the 11 activities must be completed; the 4 starred (*) items are required.

*1. Using your own design or one from a kit or book, make a "bug house". Carefully catch and observe an insect over a one or two hour period in this house. What physical characteristics are evident? Make a sketch of your bug. Make sure the "bug house" provides enough air for your bug or insect. Carefully release the bug to its natural environment when you are through observing it.

*2. Be able to identify 10 insects. Use a nature guidebook or other resource to assist you. What do these insects have in common; how are they different? How many legs do they have? Where are they commonly found? What do they eat?

3. Learn about the life cycle of an ant or bee. Draw a diagram depicting this life cycle and label the stages.

*4. Observe an insect at different stages of life. What do you see? How many parts does its body have? What is the mouth like? Does it have wings? If so, how many? Does it have antennae or feelers? What are the feet like? Draw a sketch of your insect.

5. Learn the difference between complete and incomplete metamorphosis. Name an insect that experiences each kind of metamorphosis. Choose one insect that experiences complete metamorphosis and, with your group, do a skit about these changes. You may want to design

costumes to go along with your skit.

6. Name 3 insects that are considered "harmful" and 3 that are considered "beneficial". Why are they considered harmful or beneficial? Choose one of these insects and learn more about it. Where does it live? What steps are being taken to control it or to make use of it? Why are some insects considered harmful in some environments and useful in others?

7. Name 3 animals that eat insects. In what parts of the world do these animals live? Do they help or hurt their environment by eating insects?

8. Ask a naturalist, entomologist, or science teacher to visit your group and talk about the importance of insects in our ecosystem. Write down some questions in advance that you might want to ask her, such as why insects have such short life spans or why there are so many more insects and bugs than any other type of animal.

9. Let an insect, bug, or worm crawl through some food coloring or non-toxic water colors on to a white sheet of paper. Observe the fascinating design that will appear. What can you determine from this about the way crawling animals travel?

10. Visit an Insect Zoo or arthropod exhibit. What new insects or bugs did you see there? What was the largest? The smallest? Choose your favorite insect and learn more about it. Share this information with a group of younger Girl Scouts.

*11. Go on a discovery hike to observe bugs and insects in their natural habitat. Step carefully! Without disturbing the insects, look for their

homes. Are the homes above ground or on the ground? How large are the homes? Make a

sketch of one home that you saw on your hike.