

THE SUPERKIDS LIBRARY

FIRST GRADE

# Insect Pets



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# *Insect Pets*



Written by Angus Phelps

# Reading Warm-Up List

## Story Words

watch

Madagascar

people

spiders

they

fireflies

attract

caterpillar

hours

butterfly

## Sound-Out Words

different

cockroach

cricket

mantid

beetle

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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 18130 22 21 20 19 18 17

So you want a pet, but you do not want



You want to be different. You want a pet that is unlike other pets. Hmm.

## **Perhaps you would like an insect!**

You cannot cuddle a bug.  
You cannot put an ant on a leash.



But if you have only a little spot for pets  
in your home, insects will fit.

Insects will not make big messes.

If you take good care of your new pets, and take time to watch them, you will see that insects do lots of neat stuff.



Let's see which bug  
is best for you.

# Hissing Cockroach

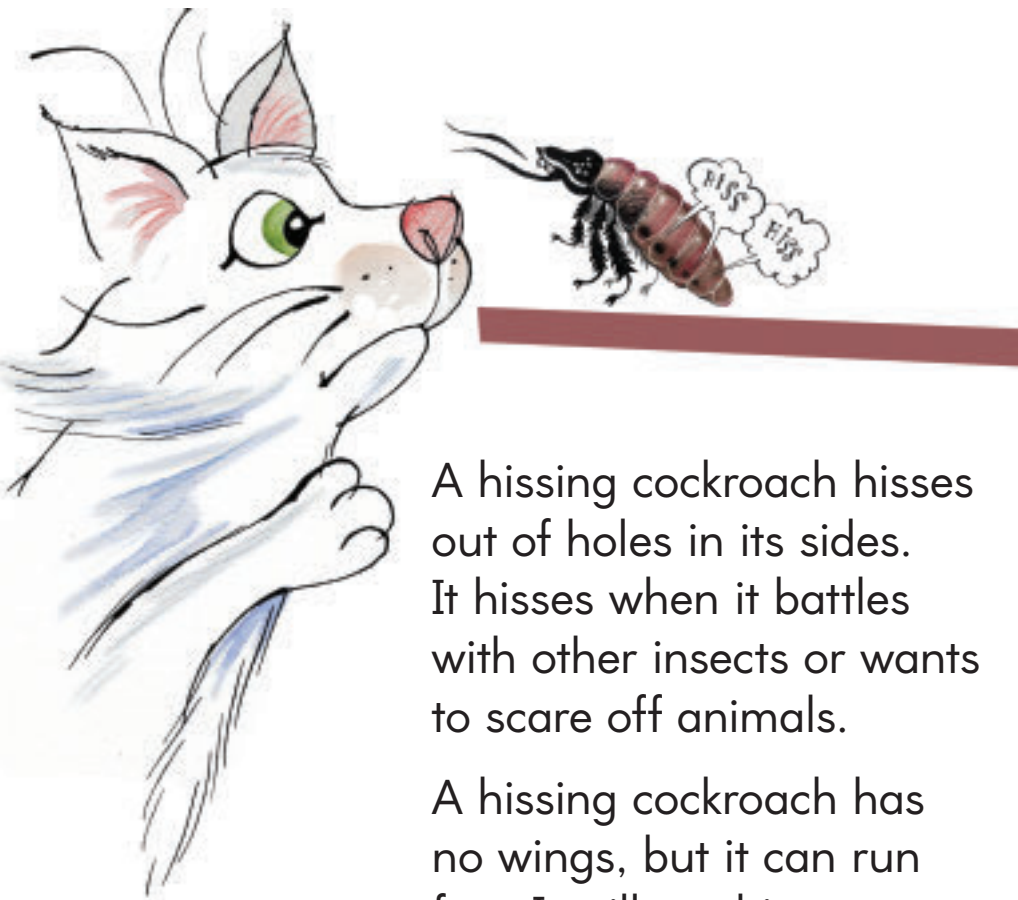
Do you want a **BIG** insect?  
Meet the hissing cockroach!

These insects can be  
three inches long.



Hissing cockroaches are from  
Madagascar, but you can get  
one in a pet shop.





A hissing cockroach hisses out of holes in its sides. It hisses when it battles with other insects or wants to scare off animals.

A hissing cockroach has no wings, but it can run fast. It will not bite.



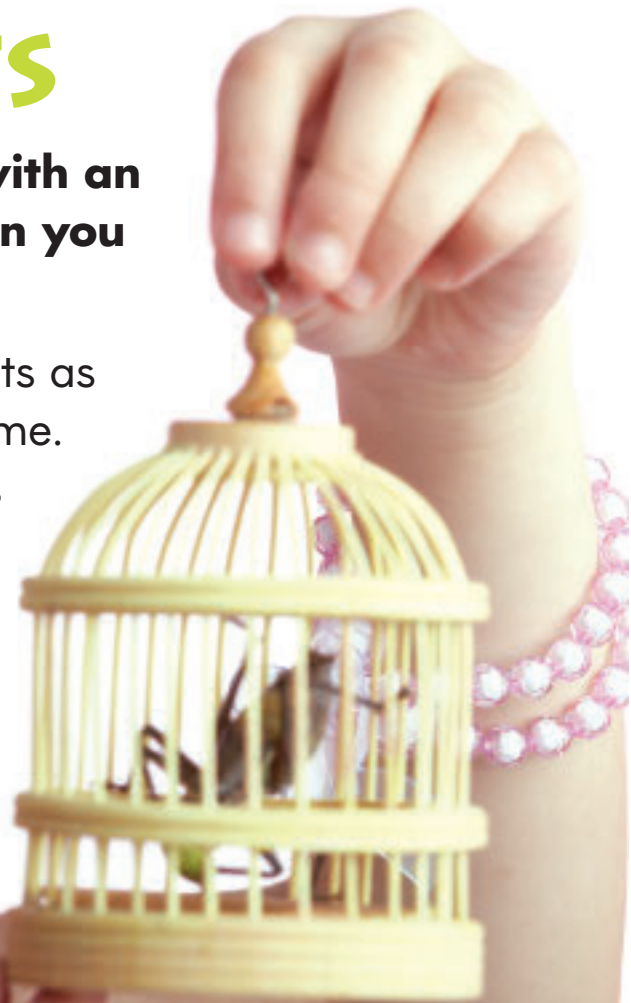
*When a hissing cockroach creeps up your leg, it tickles.*



# CRICKETS

**Do you want a pet with an interesting past? Then you will like a cricket!**

People have kept crickets as pets for a long, long time. Some said that crickets would bring good luck. People made fantastic little homes for them. No one wanted to kill a cricket.





*Men would sell crickets on the street. You could look at a bunch of crickets and then take your pick.*

People still like to keep crickets as pets.



The songs crickets sing make people think of summer. To sing, a cricket rubs one wing across the other.

If you want a cricket, you can catch one. Or you can go to a pet shop. Pet shops sell crickets to feed to other pets, like frogs. This is bad news for the crickets.



So if you get a cricket at a pet shop, you are bringing good luck to the cricket!

# SPIDERS

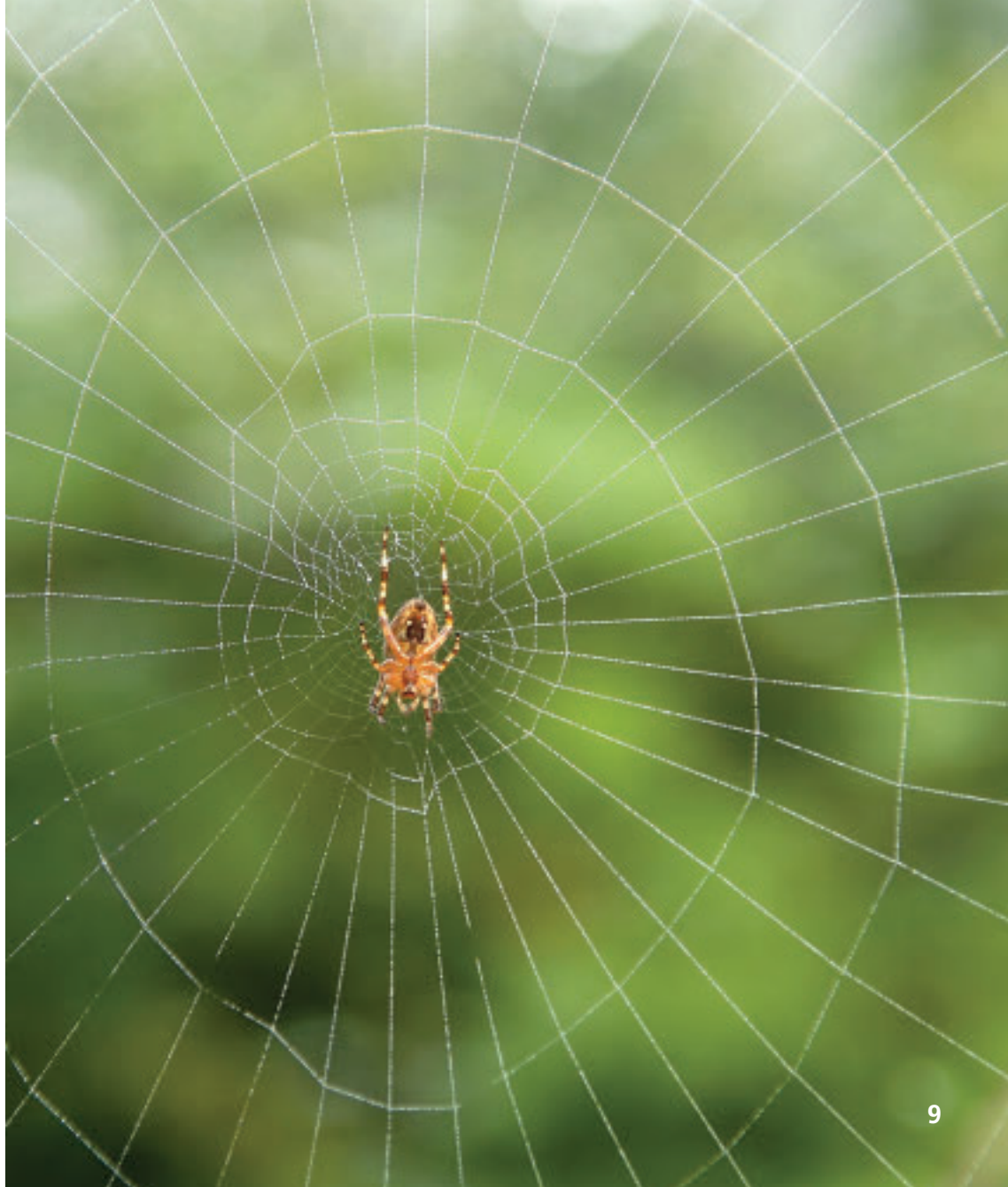


**Do you want a pet that can make your pals go “Yuck”? Then this is the pet for you.**

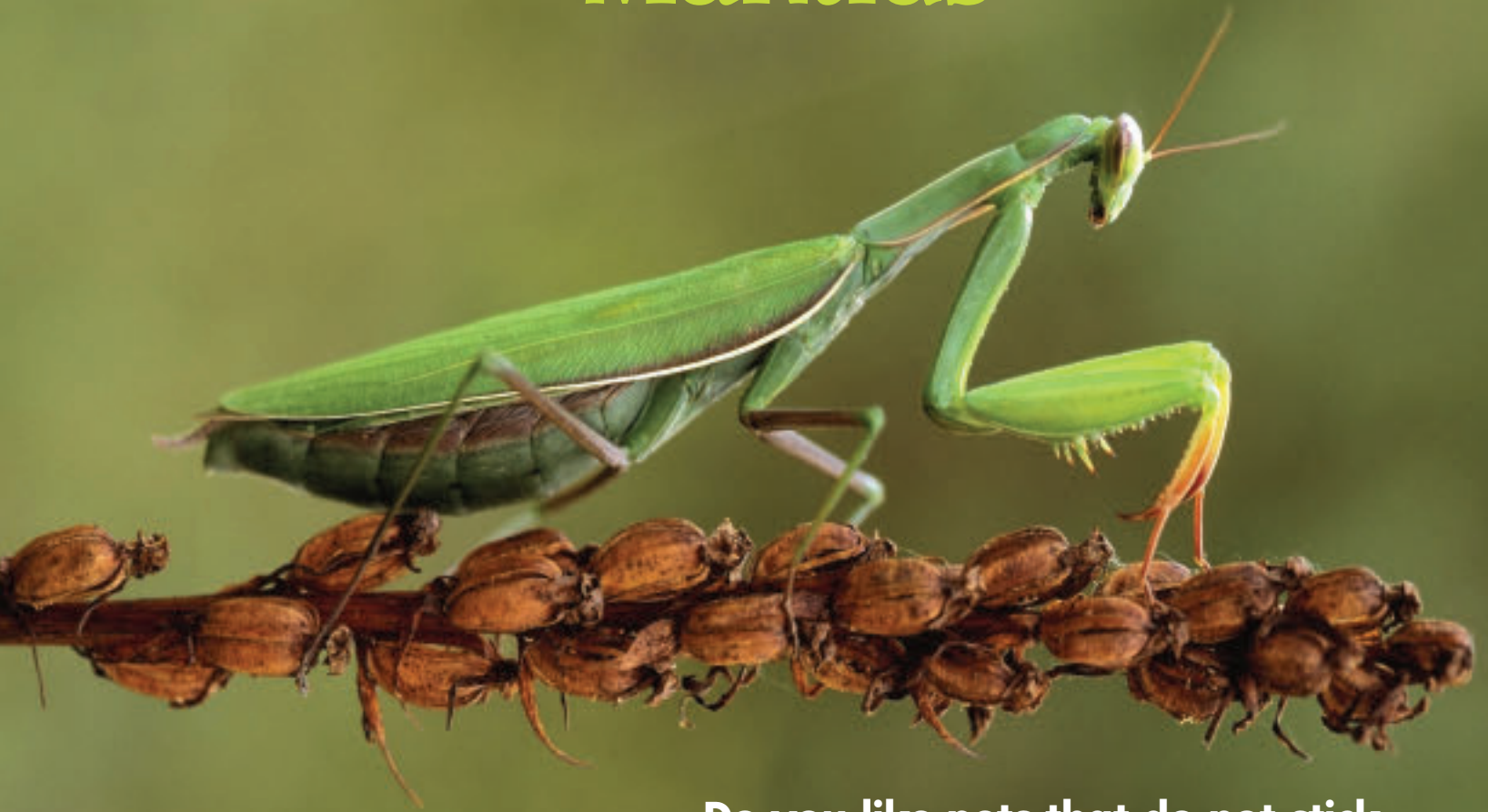
Lots of people think spiders are insects. But insects have 6 legs, and spiders have 8. So spiders are, well, just spiders.

Spiders can make silk. Some use the silk to spin webs. Some use the silk to line tunnels or to keep egg sacs safe or to ride gusts of wind.

Spiders can bite, so check with an adult if you want one as a pet.



# Mantids



**Do you like pets that do not stick out much? Pick a hide-and-seek pet, like a mantid!**

Mantids blend in with trees and bushes and can be difficult to see. A mantid eats other insects, like crickets and moths—and other mantids.

A mantid picks up stuff with its legs. The spines on the legs snag the mantid's dinner so it cannot escape while the mantid eats it.



# STICK INSECTS

A stick insect, also known as a phasmid, is shown camouflaged as a twig. It is perched on a brown, woody branch against a solid green background. The insect's body is long, thin, and light brown, perfectly matching the color and texture of the branch it is on. Its legs are also thin and light brown, extending from its body. The overall appearance is that of a natural twig, making it nearly invisible to predators.

Mantids are not the only insects that blend in.  
**A stick insect looks just like a twig.**  
There could be a stick insect under your nose and  
you would not see it.



# Leaf Insects

**A leaf insect  
looks like a leaf.**

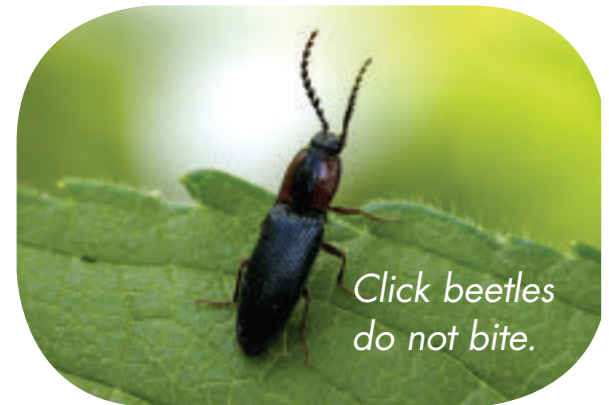
It can rock from side to side like  
a leaf fluttering in the wind.  
Some leaf insects look like a  
leaf that another insect  
has chomped.



# Other bugs

**If you go outside and look on trees and bushes, you will see other insects. Lots of them cannot be pets. They need to be outside or they will die. But you can watch them where they are.**

Can you snap your fingers? Well, an insect named the **click beetle** can snap its back. A click beetle can stretch its back till it clicks and tosses the beetle up. If a click beetle gets stuck on its back, a *click!* will flip it back up on its feet.



*Click beetles do not bite.*



*This is a mandible.*

*This beetle is winning the battle.*

You can see **stag beetles** in rotten logs. A stag beetle has big mandibles that it uses to do battle with other stag beetles.

Mandibles can pinch, so if you pick up a stag beetle, pick it up from the back.



**Ants are strong.**

They make tunnels and lift things, like sand, other bugs, and stuff to eat. They help one another lug extra-big things to the tunnels.



**Flash! Flash!** What's flickering outside in the dusk just after sunset? Fireflies! Fireflies blink to attract a mate.



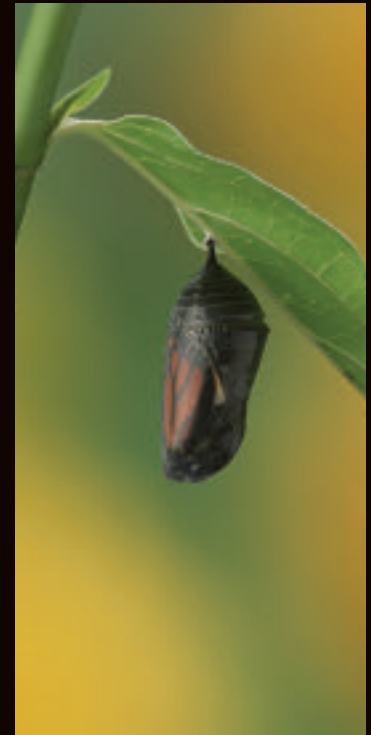
*Do not trap fireflies in a bottle or box. Fireflies need to be free or they will die.*

**Lots of insects do not look the same at different times of life.**

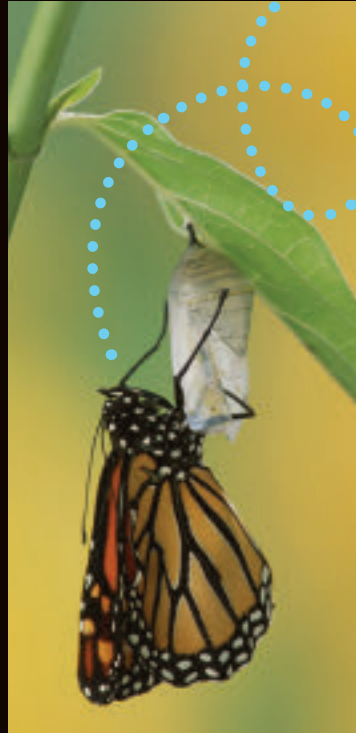
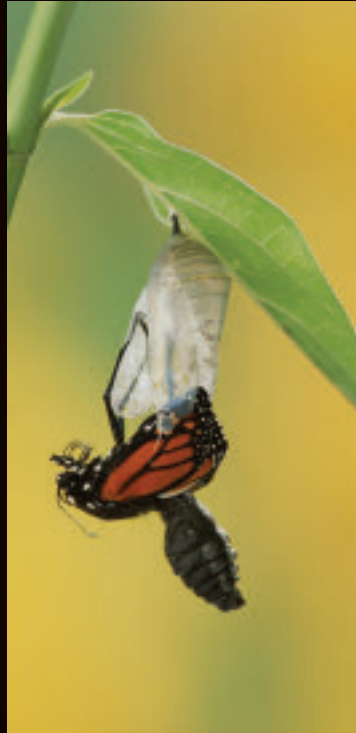
See this little caterpillar?



Watch what happens in just 2 weeks!



Watch what happens in just 2 hours!



A caterpillar will end up as a butterfly or moth. If you catch a caterpillar you must let it eat as much as it needs from the plant it likes best. Then you can watch it hatch and let the butterfly or moth go free.

# Taking care of insect pets

**If you want to keep insects as pets, you must take very good care of them.**

Read as much as you can so you understand what your insect needs to get along.



What will your insect need to eat?  
Some insects like dog kibble.  
Some like peanut butter.  
Some like plants.

How damp must your  
insect's home be?

How much will  
your insect need  
to drink?

Will your  
insect need  
a lot of heat?



## Make a good home for your insect.



A fish tank with a screen for a cover can make a perfect home.



Insects can drink from a damp rag or a little dish.



A lamp can add heat.



You can use an egg box for shade. Your insects will feel safe under an egg box.





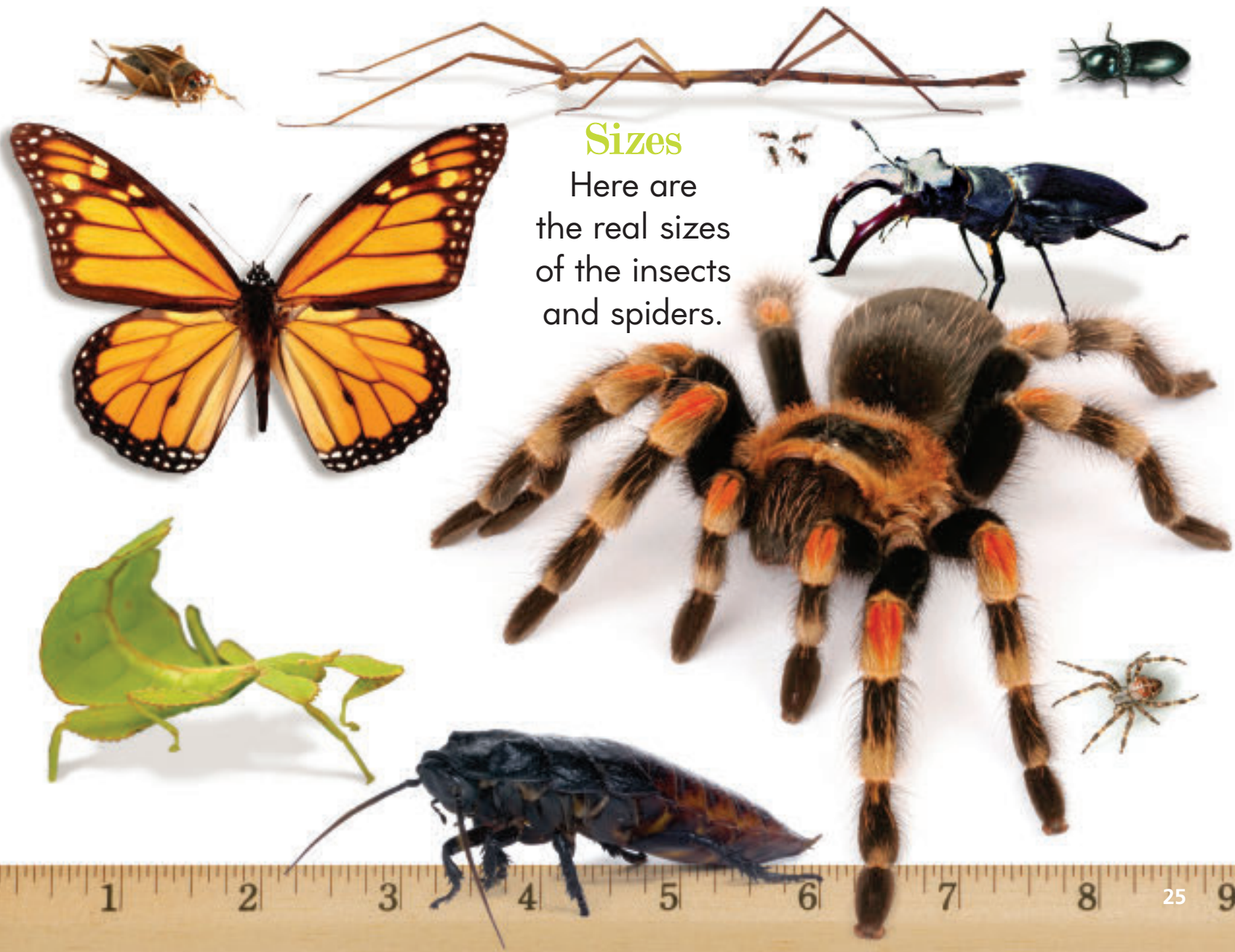
Remember:  
Some insects cannot be handled. Others can be handled, but you must do it with care or you could kill them.



Keep the tank clean, feed your insects what they like to eat, and just have fun watching them.



You can discover a lot watching insects.



## Sizes

Here are the real sizes of the insects and spiders.

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