



Imagine you're walking in the snow and you see what looks like black pepper scattered on the white blanket. No, it's not someone's lost seasoning, but rather some fascinating creatures known as snow fleas! These tiny critters are not really fleas, but are actually a type of springtail, a group of arthropods that can be found all over the world. They're super small, about the size of a typical fleck of pepper, and they have a dark blue or gray color that makes them stand out against the snow.



Continuing from their peppery appearance, let's dive into where these little guys live and what they gobble up. Snow fleas are usually found in soil and leaf litter, but they come out in large numbers on warm winter days, especially on top of snow. They feed on decaying plant material, which makes them a key player in the decomposition process, recycling nutrients back into the soil. So, while it might seem like they're just hanging out on the snow, they're actually doing a pretty important job!

Now that we know what they munch on and where they chill, let's leap into their life cycle and relationships with other creatures. These hardy springtails go through a simple metamorphosis, starting as an egg, then becoming a nymph, and finally an adult. Although they are harmless to humans and pets, they play a significant role in the food chain, serving as a food source for other invertebrates and some birds. Their ability to jump high into the air, thanks to a special fork-like structure, helps them evade predators and navigate their snowy world.



From their high jumps to their important role in the ecosystem, let's wrap up with some cool snow flea facts. Unlike true fleas, snow fleas don't bite or sting, and they're not considered pests. They have a special protein that acts like antifreeze, allowing them to be active in winter when most insects are hibernating or have died off. So, next time you see those pepper-like specks on the snow, remember they're a special kind of springtail, playing a big role in our world, even if they're just tiny snow fleas.



Solve each problem.

Determine if the statements is something the animal would say (W) or it it is not something the animal would say (N).

- 1) "My diet mainly consists of fresh plant material."
- 2) "I am known for my annoying bites and stings, just like true fleas."
- 3) "The cold doesn't bother me! I have a special protein that acts like antifreeze, allowing me to keep moving in winter."
- 4) "Dry, sandy soil is my ultimate favorite spot to chill."
- 5) "I usually freeze to death in winter."
- 6) "I sure love to eat fresh, green leaves!"
- 7) "I'm tiny, about the size of pepper you sprinkle on your food."
- 8) "I eat decaying plants to survive, and this helps recycle nutrients back into the soil."
- 9) "Even though I resemble them, I'm not really a flea. And, unlike them, I don't bite or sting."
- 10) "I usually blend in with the snow."
- 11) "I prefer flying when it comes to getting around."
- 12) "I don't like coming out in the snow, it's too cold!"
- 13) "Flea may be in my name, but I have no relation to the blood sucking pest you find on your pets."
- 14) "Winter is the worst time for me, I usually just hibernate or die off."
- 15) "I'm not a insect, but an arthropod."
- 16) "I usually hang out in the soil and leaf litter, but you'll see me in large numbers on top of the snow on warm winter days."
- 17) "My color can be dark blue or gray, which makes me easy to spot on the snow."
- 18) "I'm generally not part of the food chain. No creature would like to eat me."
- 19) "My life begins as an egg, then I become a nymph before maturing into an adult."
- 20) "I might look like a tiny speck on the snow, but I play a big role in food chains. Other creatures consider me a food source."

Determine if the statement is a fact or opinion based on the information in the article.

- 21) Snow fleas do not bite or sting.
- 22) The special protein that snow fleas have, which allows them to survive in winter, is quite amazing.
- 23) The life cycle of a snow flea starts as an egg, then it becomes a nymph, and finally an adult.
- 24) Snow fleas are the most interesting springtails because of their blue or gray color.
- 25) Snow fleas are not actually fleas, but are springtails.
- 26) Snow fleas are gross because they feed on decaying plant material.
- 27) Snow fleas can remain active in winter due to a special protein they have that acts like antifreeze.



- 51) How do snow fleas survive in the cold weather?
- 52) Snow fleas are not actually fleas, but are more closely related to ants and butterflies.
- 53) Where can snow fleas be found during the winter?
- 54) Snow fleas can be found in forests, especially on the forest floor.
- 55) If you want to spot snow fleas, go outside after it snows.
- 56) It's great that snow fleas don't harm humans and even help the environment!
- 57) Please be careful not to step on the snow fleas.



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| 1. <u>false</u> | 26. <u>opinion</u> | 51. <u>interrogative</u> |
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| 3. <u>true</u> | 28. <u>fact</u> | 53. <u>interrogative</u> |
| 4. <u>false</u> | 29. <u>opinion</u> | 54. <u>declarative</u> |
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| 19. <u>true</u> | 44. <u>A</u> | |
| 20. <u>true</u> | 45. <u>C</u> | |
| 21. <u>fact</u> | 46. <u>exclamatory</u> | |
| 22. <u>opinion</u> | 47. <u>imperative</u> | |
| 23. <u>fact</u> | 48. <u>interrogative</u> | |
| 24. <u>opinion</u> | 49. <u>exclamatory</u> | |
| 25. <u>fact</u> | 50. <u>declarative</u> | |



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