



Imagine a bug with a wheel on its back, sounds pretty cool, right? Well, meet the wheel bug, a fascinating insect that gets its name from the spiky, wheel-shaped crest on its back. This curious creature is one of the largest members of the assassin bug family, growing up to 1.5 inches long. Their bodies are usually brown or grey, and they have long, slender legs and antennae.



Continuing our journey, let's delve into the habitats of these unique bugs. Wheel bugs are native to North America and can be found from coast to coast, living in forests, gardens, and fields. They're true homebodies and usually stay in the same area their whole life. They prefer warmer climates, but can survive in colder regions during the winter by hiding under leaf litter or bark.

Now, what do you think these critters eat? They have quite an appetite for other bugs, including harmful pests like aphids and caterpillars. They use their long, sharp beak to stab their prey and inject a venom that turns their insides into liquid, which they then slurp up like a bug smoothie! Despite their scary feeding habits, wheel bugs are generally not aggressive towards humans unless provoked.

Let's take a peek into the wheel bug's life cycle and defenses. After mating in the fall, the female lays a cluster of eggs that hatch into tiny nymphs in the spring. These nymphs go through several stages of growth before becoming adults, shedding their skin each time. Their wheel-shaped crest not only makes them look cool, but also serves as a warning to predators that they are not a tasty snack.

In the world of bugs, wheel bugs certainly stand out with their unique appearance and lifestyle. They play an important role in controlling pest populations, making them a friend to gardeners and farmers. Though they might look a bit scary, remember they're more interested in gobbling up other bugs than bothering humans. So next time you're exploring the great outdoors, keep an eye out for these incredible insects and their wheel-shaped crests!





Solve each problem.

Use the article to answer the question.

- 1) How do wheel bugs feed on their prey?
 - A. They use their wheel to crush their prey.
 - B. They spin their prey in their wheel to stun them.
 - C. They tie up their prey with silk before eating it.
 - D. They inject a venom that turns their prey's insides into liquid.

- 2) What is the purpose of the wheel bug's wheel-shaped crest?
 - A. It is used to grind their food.
 - B. It helps them move faster.
 - C. It serves as a warning to predators.
 - D. It captures sunlight for energy.

- 3) What color are wheel bugs?
 - A. They are usually brown or grey.
 - B. They are usually orange or white.
 - C. They are usually yellow or red.
 - D. They are usually green or black.

- 4) Do wheel bugs travel a lot?
 - A. No, they usually stay in the same area their whole life.
 - B. Yes, each day they make a new home
 - C. Yes, they travel south for the winter.
 - D. Yes, they move to new places every season.

- 5) When do female wheel bugs lay their eggs?
 - A. In the fall.
 - B. In the winter.
 - C. In the summer.
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- 6) How big do wheel bugs get?
 - A. Almost 8 inches
 - B. Almost 12 inches
 - C. Almost 2 inches
 - D. Almost 6 inches

- 7) Where do wheel bugs usually prefer to live?
 - A. In watery areas like lakes and ponds.
 - B. In deserts and dry areas.
 - C. Only in snow and cold areas.
 - D. In forests, gardens, and fields.

- 8) What role do wheel bugs play for gardeners and farmers?
 - A. They control pest populations.
 - B. They scare away other insects.
 - C. They help plants grow faster.
 - D. They spread pollen from flower to flower.

- 9) How do wheel bugs survive in cold regions?
 - A. By staying with birds in their nest
 - B. By locating caves and staying in them
 - C. Hiding under leaves
 - D. By hiding in underground burrows

- 10) Wheel bugs are members of what bug family?
 - A. Praying mantis
 - B. Lady bugs
 - C. Assassin bugs
 - D. Stink bugs



- 11) What gives the wheel bug its name?
- A. It spins like a wheel when it moves. B. They have wheels instead of legs.
C. The wheel-shaped crest on its back. D. Their eyes are shaped like wheels.

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

- 12) "I'm a farmer's best friend, keeping their crops safe from harmful pests."
13) "Here's a creepy thing I do - I stab other bugs with my sharp beak and turn their insides into liquid, which I then drink up!"
14) "We wheel bugs are a pest for gardeners and farmers."
15) "Please don't provoke me! I won't bother you if you keep your distance."
16) "I can live anywhere from a dense forest to your home garden."
17) "Want to know how I survive in winter? I hide under leaf litter or bark!"
18) "I really enjoy feasting on plants and fruits."
19) "Believe it or not, I'm one of the biggest assassin bugs around."
20) "My wheel-shaped crest, besides being cool, acts as a warning to predators."
21) "I am really tiny, less than an inch long."
22) "We wheel bugs lay eggs daily."
23) "If you give me a warm climate, I'll be the happiest bug around."
24) "Here's an interesting tidbit - I usually stay put in one place throughout my life."
25) "I can't stand warm climates, I love cold places the most."
26) "I am a good friend of aphids and caterpillars."
27) "Sometimes I can be quite a nightmare for aphids and caterpillars, they're my favorite snacks!"

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

- 28) Wheel bugs use a long, sharp beak to pierce their prey and inject venom, which turns their prey's insides into a liquid that they consume.
29) It is amazing that wheel bugs can survive in a variety of climates, even in colder regions.
30) Wheel bugs are carnivorous and they feed on other bugs like aphids and caterpillars.
31) The way wheel bugs turn their prey into a liquid using their venom before eating it is kind of gross.
32) Wheel bugs are native to North America, living in different places like forests, gardens, and fields.
33) Wheel bugs are the best bugs because they control pest populations and help gardeners and farmers.
34) Wheel bugs shed their skin several times during their growth period from being nymphs to becoming adults.
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37) The way wheel bugs consume their prey is gross.

Determine if the statement is true or false.

- 38) Wheel bugs are native to North America.
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Determine if the sentence is a declarative(d), exclamatory(e), interrogative(i) or imperative(m).

- 48) Do wheel bugs change their colors?
- 49) The way wheel Bugs feed by injecting their prey with digestive enzymes and then sucking out the liquefied insides is incredibly gross!
- 50) Wheel bugs have a unique wheel-shaped structure on their thorax.
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| 1. <u> D </u> | 26. <u> false </u> | 51. <u> exclamatory </u> |
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| 3. <u> A </u> | 28. <u> fact </u> | 53. <u> interrogative </u> |
| 4. <u> A </u> | 29. <u> opinion </u> | 54. <u> declarative </u> |
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| 22. <u> false </u> | 47. <u> true </u> | |
| 23. <u> true </u> | 48. <u> interrogative </u> | |
| 24. <u> true </u> | 49. <u> exclamatory </u> | |
| 25. <u> false </u> | 50. <u> declarative </u> | |

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