

# Insect world



Gyöngyházlepke

Similarly to the flora the Nagy-Eged is rich in its fauna as well. The mountain has a special warm climate therefore the insects similar to the Balkan or the Mediterranean Sea-basin can be found here in great numbers. Many of the special insects like sphinx-moth, owl moths, hanging moths can be found on these slopes only.

**Saw legged grasshopper** (*Saga pedo*) is Europe's biggest insect. It is a typical insect of the medium mountains and their living areas are like isles. They are not only interesting because of their 6-7 cm big body mass but in Hungary there are only the female insects so they reproduce with parthenogenesis.



A very useful and loved bug race is **seven spotted ladybird**. On their wing covers there are three and a half dots per side. A full grown ladybird lays 350-400 ovules and in one week they hatch. Their hatchlings are predators and they are very useful for the lands because they eat plant and shield louse. During their evolution they consume more than 100 louses. Do not confuse them with the Harlequin ladybirds; they are an invasive bug race, not native in Hungary.

One of our most beautiful butterfly is the **swallowtail butterfly**. They mostly like hilly slopes but they show up in gardens around the houses, too looking for nutrition. In summer they look like sailing as they fly over the meadows from flower to flower looking for nectars. The adult butterfly lives for 3-4 weeks and lays 2 times ovules. The ovules can be found on apiales plants with umbrella flower like: dill and hamlock.



Another big insect to see is **praying mantis**. They catch their victim with their modified front legs. Praying mantis has interesting names in local language like: hypocrite elf. Sometimes during their mating the female cuts of the male's head and eats the body. From human perspective it looks weird but from nature's view its normal since the female needs lots of protein to feed the ovules as they grow and she produces a foam: the so called Kokon as a protecting cover.

This little bug is only 6-8 millimeters. The **onion bug's** wing covers have vivid cinnabar red or reddish brown colors. We can see them from April until the end of June during this time they consume lilies and bulbous. Polygonatum odoratum /Solomon's Seal/ is its favorite food. The grub has a special defense system: They cover themselves with faeces bubble so the bug eater birds do not like them.



This big bug has a funny name after its size and funny movement. It is Nünüke (**black oil beetle**). Females can be 3-5 cm big. They look tasty for insect eaters but their body has poison inside so they are avoided instead. Their mating is very interesting. The ovules climb up on flowers then travel by bees to the hive as free riders. In the hive they devour the bee larvae and later eat honey. The next form of the larvae leaves the hive and the pupa is transformed on the ground into an adult Nünüke.

