

PROBE



THEY CALL ME TWIGGY!

.....the story of a stick insect

A stick insect's life begins when its mother flicks her eggs off into the leaves around her.

SEE YOU LATER KIDS! I'M NOT STICKING AROUND HERE FOR LONG.

The eggs look like tiny water bottles with their caps on.

WASNT I THE CUTEST BABY YOU'VE EVER SEEN?

LOOKS MORE LIKE A WATER BOTTLE

WELL

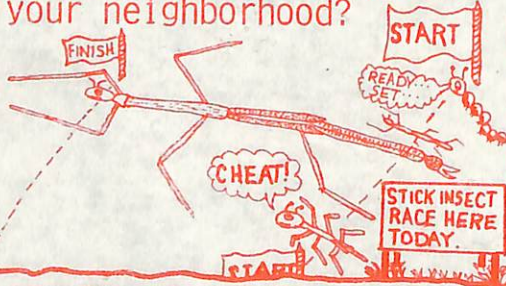
YUK!

Some stick insects don't have dads....

I'M LOOKING FOR MR. S. INSECT

...their mums make the eggs themselves.

One sort of stick insect is over 30 centimetres long. How long are the ones in your neighborhood?



START

READY SET

CHEAT!

STICK INSECT RACE HERE TODAY.

When a stick insect is scared, it falls down and keeps very still. How would this help it to stay alive?



If a stick insect is held roughly by a leg (as a hungry bird might do) it can escape by leaving its leg behind.



Only young ones can grow new legs back again.

How does the shape of a stick insect help to protect it from hungry enemies like birds and rats?



Stick insects that feed on grass and leaves are green but.....



those that like to live on bark are brown.



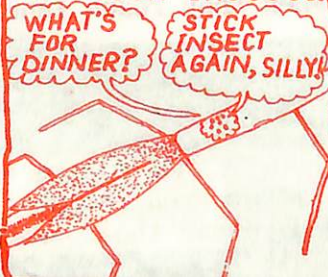
Why is color important to stick insects?

Some stick insects make a juice which can hurt your eyes...



BY D. BRYDON

Sometimes flies lay their eggs in stick insects.



HOW DID IT GET HERE? THE SPREADING OF SEEDS

Australia's Mistletoe-bird loves to eat the tasty Mistletoe berry. The seed inside the berry is not hurt as it passes through the bird's body. It ends up in a glue-like mixture on the bark of another gum tree. Would this happen if the berry was not so tasty?

A man called Charles Darwin once counted 537 seeds in the mud on the feet of a bird.

Any animal that steps on a Squirting Cucumber is helping to spread seeds. The 'Cucumber explodes and seeds go flying everywhere.

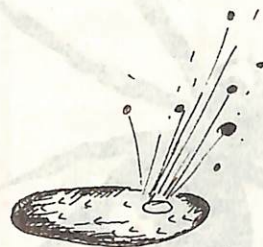
Orchids have tiny seeds like dust. The wind blows the seeds far away to new, not so crowded, soil.

Coconuts float from island to island, starting new coconut trees when they reach land.

Dandelions and thistle seeds are so light that they float away to new homes.

Seeds from weeds are often brought to new countries in ships. Milkweed, a pest to Australian farmers, was brought to our country by accident.

If you've ever thought that plants are stupid, think again. Plants are really very clever. Even though they don't think like humans do, plants grow and spread their seeds in clever ways. Why do they need to do this?



Find a banksia tree in your neighborhood. The different looking seed cases and flowers make banksias easy to find. Have most of the seed cases fallen off the tree to start a new plant in the ground below? Many Australian wattles and banksias have seed cases which will not open until a bush fire's heat forces them to crack open. After the fire has killed the older plants, new ones are ready to come up.



Have you ever got burrs in your socks. These are seeds which have hooks on them. How do the hooks help spread the seed?

Don't Touch!

The RED BACK SPIDER (on the right) is found in most parts of Australia. It builds its web in covered places like woodheaps, rubbish dumps, outside toilets or empty tins. Only the female (woman) spider is dangerous. Her poison can kill-if you see one keep well away and tell a grown-up. If bitten, A DOCTOR MUST BE CALLED.



A RED BACK SPIDER



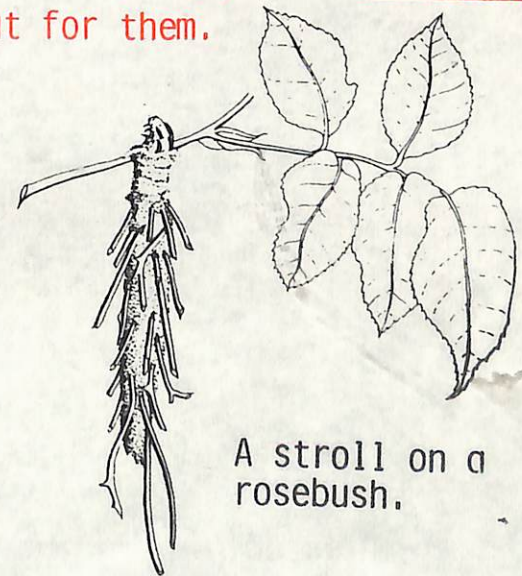
A SYDNEY FUNNEL-WEB

The SYDNEY FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER lives mainly around Sydney. It is our country's most dangerous killer spider. Funnel webs live in silk tubes in open spaces among loose leaves roots or rocks. Keep well away from this fellow!

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What do casemoths do in winter?

Unlike most other caterpillars, the Casemoth caterpillar lives for more than one year without changing into a moth. A case, built mainly out of sticks or leaves, protects the caterpillar from bad weather and enemies. What animal do you think might be the enemy of caterpillars? Female Casemoths are the 'stay-at-homes' of the family. Once their case is built, these legless, mouthless and eyeless ladies stay inside it until they die. In the middle of March small dark eggs are laid in the mother's case. When it hatches, the larva lowers itself down by a silken thread and begins to build its own case. Only the male (boy) Casemoth caterpillars will ever turn into flying moths. This usually happens in February, so watch out for them.



A stroll on a rosebush.

The lion that does not roar

It won't be too hard to find a dandelion in your schoolyard or your backyard at home. Dent-de-lion are French words meaning "teeth of a lion". Look at the leaves of a dandelion. Can you see why the plant has been given its special name?

Soak the soil around a dandelion with water. It should be easy to pull the plant up without breaking the roots too much. Look at the thick part of the root. This is where extra food for the plant is stored. Many other plants store extra food in their roots, too. We eat some of these roots as vegetables. What are their names?

Break off one of the dandelion's stems. What color is the juice that oozes out? This juice protects the plant from germs that could make the plant sick.

Look at the hairy part of the dandelion's root. What do the little hairs do for the plant? What can happen after 2 or 3 really hot and dry days?



Look at the green leaf-like pieces on the back of the dandelion's flower. At night and in bad weather these force the flower to close. This protects the pollen. What is pollen?

Have you any flowers in your garden? Which of them close up at night?