



**London Borough  
of Hounslow**

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# Nature Leaflet

## Insects



Common Darter Dragonfly

## Insects

### Did you know?

- There are more species of insects in the world than any other organism.
- Invertebrates represent roughly 80% of all animal species.
- The largest group of insects are beetles, there are over 4,000 species in Britain alone.

### Why are insects important?

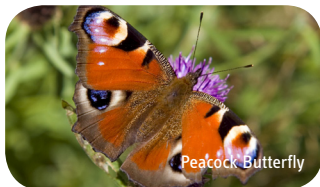
Many insects are feared or disliked by people, but most are beneficial not only to the natural ecosystems in which they live, but also to our way of life. We need insects to:

- Pollinate our crop plants.
- Prey on our pest species.
- Help with the decaying process to dispose of all dead matter.



### Moths and Butterflies

There are around 56 species of butterfly and some 2,500 species of moth in Britain and Ireland. Many are under threat from habitat destruction and the effects of climate change. Moths and butterflies are in abundance during spring and summer and are important to our countryside as they pollinate many species of wild flowers. Several species have evolved connections to specific plants, such as the blue butterflies with Bird's-foot-trefoil and Goat Moth with willow.



### Dragonflies and Damselflies

Fantastic, colourful predatory insects, formally known respectively as Horse Stingers and Devil's Darning Needles due to their appearance and hues. They live around wet areas where they prey on other insects.

### Bees and Wasps

There is a large number of Bee species. Mining Bees are solitary ground nesters, Solitary Bees nest in aerial locations such as in timbers or hollow dead stems of plants. Honey and Bumbles are social nesters that live in colonies. Cuckoo Bees live in the nests of solitary or social bees. Most bees collect pollen that their larvae feed upon with the exception of the Cuckoo Bee.

Most wasp species capture, sting, and paralyse prey that are fed to their larvae. Most species usually have a narrow range of insects and other invertebrate prey that they hunt. There are Solitary species that nest in the ground or in aerial locations. Social species are the best known such as the Common Wasp and Hornet.

There are also Spider-hunting Wasps, that specialise in taking spiders as prey, and Cuckoo Wasps that parasitize solitary species.

### Beetles

One of the most important species present in Hounslow is the Stag Beetle where its distribution makes this area of London one of the most important for its conservation in the City.

### Hoverflies

They are abundant on flowers for much of the year, feeding on both pollen and nectar. The insects vary a great deal in size and shape and mimicry is much used by this family of flies, usually to make them look like bees and wasps. There are about 250 hoverfly species in Britain.