

How Insects Live in Winter



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Summer is most insects' favorite time of year. Yet, neither fall nor even winter stops all insect activity. Many insects disappear from view, but a few enjoy winter's freezing temperatures.

Indeed, some insects are only seen in winter. The largest group of snow insects are in the springtail family. Springtails get their name from the way they

move. They have a spring-like tail that releases to make the insect jump. One kind of springtail is the snow flea. Snow fleas are very small, but they're not true fleas. However, they do like the snow, and they jump like fleas.

Most insects don't like the cold weather, though. That's because, like snakes, insects can't make their own heat. They have to get heat from their environment. Insects also have a lot of water in their bodies, like humans do. But because insects are so small, they can freeze to death in cold weather. To stay alive, different types of bugs do different things.

Some insects hibernate. Hibernating insects are not asleep. Instead, they move very slowly so they don't use too much energy. Ladybugs hibernate in large groups on or under the bark of trees. They can make a whole tree look orange. When some insects hibernate, they replace the water in their bodies with a sugary substance that prevents them from freezing.

Other insects, like ants and honeybees, stay close together to keep warm. Ants spend the summer gathering food, which they store in their underground homes. That allows them to spend the winter under the ground, where it's not so cold. Honeybees stay close together in their hives. They keep warm by vibrating their wings.

Some insects leave town in the winter. Monarch butterflies fly to warmer places. Some travel as far as 2,000 miles to find warmer winter weather.

Insects have many different ways to survive until it's spring again. How do you stay warm in the winter?



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