

Cold prompts change for insects

Shortened daylight hours is the cue used by plants and animals that foretells the approach of cold winter temperatures.

Cold-blooded animals such as insects, reptiles and amphibians, whose body temperature is basically controlled by the ambient temperature, are unable to function during this time. They must survive the

winter in a form that can tolerate the freezing temperatures.

Because the number of visible insects decreases dramatically now, it is unusual to see any insects at all, let alone large ones. While walking the fields and meadows lately, I have seen some butterflies and some true bugs.

Beautiful yellow sulfur butterflies had survived the early October snow we had and were spending their last days looking for scant sources of nectar. They overwinter as a green chrysalis.

Several times during the summer and during fall people had questioned me about a large brown insect they had found. Its large size and leathery nature made this 1 1/2-inch

Easter Seals needs help

The Easter Seal Society of Oakland County needs volunteers who are comfortable with children, to assist in a Disability Awareness Program. Volunteers will be trained to go into day care centers to teach youngsters about disabilities. Those interested can call 338-9626 for details.



nature
Timothy Nowicki

long and three-eighths wide insect very visible.

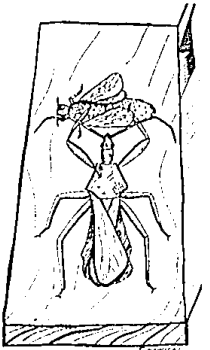
IT TURNED out to be one of the assassin bugs. A true bug, not just a generic bug. True bugs have forewings partially membranous at the tips and thickened at the base. Their wings are held flat on their backs and often form a triangle just behind the thorax. They also have sucking mouth parts.

Assassin bugs can be recognized by their long narrow head, and as their name implies, they are predators on other insects. This assassin bug is particularly fond of bees

Long muscular legs enable this insect to subdue large prey. One day at the Cranbrook Institute of Science nature center I noticed a bee assassin perched on the window sill next to the hive entrance.

Waiting patiently for prey to approach within range of their powerful legs is the method used by these insects to capture a meal. They often seem to find their way into hives in search of food, and though they are a large insect, they are not harmful to man.

Tim Nowicki is a naturalist at Independence-Oaks Park in Oakland County. He lives in Livonia.



Assassin bug with prey.

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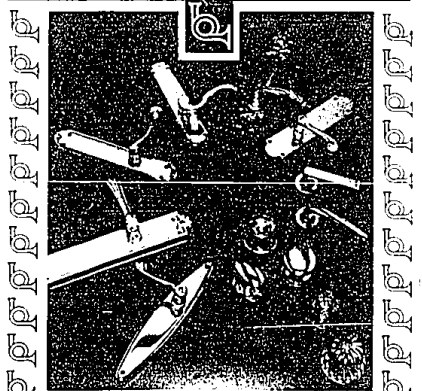
His parents felt it was time he had a place of his own. After all, he was 15.

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'Hams' to test skills

About 70 Oakland County amateur radio operators recently participated in a national simulated emergency test to show their ability to provide communications in an emergency or disaster.

Test messages were sent to a variety of police, fire and EMS offices in the county, as well as to hospitals and officials in local communities. The amateurs delivered these simulated messages and then relayed responses to the Emergency Operations Center in the county government complex.

The test was conducted with the support of the Oakland County EMS/Emergency Management offices.

Amateur radio operators were present and provided communications temporarily housed in shelters during the cleanup of the Milford train wreck and also at

the recent train wreck in Freeland.

Amateur radio operators assisted with communications after the California earthquake. Amateurs provided communications to the islands in the Caribbean during and after Hurricane Hugo.

Amateurs also provided communications after the Mexico City earthquake in 1985.

In every case, the communications were used to support local government communications and to relieve trained officials so that they could perform their duties in other ways.

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