



## Bug Safari Adventure! (Ages 8+)

### Go on a Garden Discovery Adventure!

Discover the tiny creatures that help your garden grow! This safari will help you understand who's working hard in your backyard ecosystem. **Note:** This will help as you plan your garden!

#### What You'll Need:

- This safari sheet or a notebook
- Pencil or pen
- A magnifying glass (optional but fun!)
- A grown-up or safari buddy
- Gentle hands and curious eyes

#### What to Do:

- Look everywhere:** Check leaves, soil, around garden edges, and near flowers
- Document discoveries:** Write down or draw what you find—what does it look like? What is it doing?
- Find the garden helpers:** Try to spot at least one pollinator, one predator, and one soil helper
- Compare habitats:** Notice where you found the most bugs—sunny spots, shady areas, or near flowers?
- Be gentle:** These bugs are busy doing important jobs for your garden!

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### Safety First - Know Before You Go!

#### Dangerous Creatures to Watch For:

- ⇒ **Brown recluse & black widow spiders** - Look for webs in dark corners
- ⇒ **Wasps, hornets, or bee nests** - Listen for buzzing, avoid if you hear it
- ⇒ **Fire ants** (Southern regions) - Small, aggressive ants in mounds
- ⇒ **Ticks** - Tiny parasites that attach to skin (check yourself afterward!)
- ⇒ **Stinging insects** - Bees, wasps, yellow jackets near flowers



## Watch Out for Poisonous Plants Too:

- ⇒ **Poison ivy** - "Leaves of three, let it be!"
- ⇒ **Poison oak** - Similar to poison ivy
- ⇒ **Stinging nettle** - Leaves that burn when touched

## Safe Bug Hunting Spots:

- ⇒ Open garden areas and flower beds (still be aware of bees and wasps!)
- ⇒ Visible leaf surfaces (top and bottom)
- ⇒ Around plants you know are safe
- ⇒ Well-lit areas during daytime

## Risky Areas - Explore with Extra Caution:

- ⇒ Dark corners and crevices
- ⇒ Under sheds, decks, or porches
- ⇒ Woodpiles and brush piles
- ⇒ Tall grass or overgrown areas
- ⇒ Inside old containers or equipment

## Safety Rules for Bug Detectives:

- ⇒ **Always have an adult nearby** during your safari
- ⇒ **Look but don't touch** unknown insects or spiders
- ⇒ **Wear closed-toe shoes** and long pants if exploring tall grass
- ⇒ **Use a stick or tool** to move leaves or debris instead of your hands
- ⇒ **Check for ticks** on clothes and skin when you're done
- ⇒ **Know your dangerous plants** - learn to identify them before exploring
- ⇒ **If you see a nest or hear buzzing** - slowly back away and explore elsewhere

**Remember: Most bugs are harmless and helpful! These safety tips just help you explore smart.**

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## Welcome, Junior Entomologist!

**Explorer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weather:** \_\_\_\_\_

Time for a scientific bug expedition! Use your observation skills to study insects and other small creatures. Remember to be gentle and respectful to all living things.

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### Exploration Sites

Check off each habitat you investigate:

- Under leaves** 🌿 - Look for hiding insects
- In the soil** 🌱 - Check for ground-dwellers
- On flowering plants** 🌸 - Find pollinators
- Near water sources** 💧 - Discover moisture-loving bugs
- On vegetable plants** 🥬 - Spot plant-eaters
- In shady/wild areas** 🌿 - Explore untamed spots

**Other interesting places:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Field Observations

**Specimen #1**

**Species name or description:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical characteristics:**

**Size:**  Tiny (ant-sized)  Small (penny-sized)  Medium (quarter-sized)  Large (bigger than quarter)

**Body parts:**  Head, thorax, abdomen clearly visible  Segmented body  Unsegmented

**Wings:**  None  2 wings  4 wings  Wing covers (elytra)

**Color/patterns:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Habitat found:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavior observed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of legs counted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Beneficial or harmful?**  Beneficial (helps garden)  Harmful (damages plants)   
Neutral  Not sure

**Why do you think so?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Specimen #2

**Species name or description:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical characteristics:**

**Size:**  Tiny (ant-sized)  Small (penny-sized)  Medium (quarter-sized)  Large (bigger than quarter)

**Body parts:**  Head, thorax, abdomen clearly visible  Segmented body   
Unsegmented

**Wings:**  None  2 wings  4 wings  Wing covers (elytra)

**Color/patterns:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Habitat found:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavior observed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of legs counted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Beneficial or harmful?**  Beneficial (helps garden)  Harmful (damages plants)   
Neutral  Not sure

**Why do you think so?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Specimen #3

**Species name or description:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical characteristics:

**Size:**  Tiny (ant-sized)  Small (penny-sized)  Medium (quarter-sized)  Large (bigger than quarter)

**Body parts:**  Head, thorax, abdomen clearly visible  Segmented body  Unsegmented

**Wings:**  None  2 wings  4 wings  Wing covers (elytra)

**Color/patterns:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Habitat found:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavior observed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of legs counted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Beneficial or harmful?**  Beneficial (helps garden)  Harmful (damages plants)  Neutral  Not sure

**Why do you think so?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Garden Helper Analysis

**Beneficial insects you spotted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you think they help the garden?**

- Eat harmful bugs
- Pollinate plants
- Break down dead material
- Improve soil
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Harmful insects you found: \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of damage might they cause? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find more beneficial or harmful insects today? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Scientific Classification

Based on leg count, group your discoveries:

- 6 legs - True Insects** (beetles, bees, butterflies, ants)  
Count found: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8 legs - Arachnids** (spiders, harvestmen)  
Count found: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Many legs - Myriapods** (millipedes, centipedes)  
Count found: \_\_\_\_\_
  - No legs - Other arthropods/invertebrates** (worms, slugs)  
Count found: \_\_\_\_\_
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## Most Fascinating Discovery

Which creature captured your scientific curiosity most?

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What made it interesting from a scientific perspective?

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What questions do you have about this creature?

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## Scientific Illustration

Draw your most interesting specimen with scientific accuracy:

**Labels to include:** Body parts, distinctive features, habitat notes

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## Expedition Summary

**Total species observed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time spent exploring:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Most common habitat:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hypothesis for future exploration:** What do you think you'd find if you came back at a different time of day or season?