

The Hidden World of Insects

Before I begin, I'd like to share a realization that I had during my photo sessions.

“If you currently can't find anything to be thankful for - be thankful that insects don't come in 'large' sizes.”

All else can be dealt with. Your life is good. Trust me.

I realized this not long after I begun finding spiders and various garden bugs, and taking close up pictures of them. So I stand by my words.

Isn't it amazing that there is a whole other world out there, the one most of us ignore and don't think twice about. But it's there, whole system made of millions of tiny living beings, all existing alongside us. Same country, same city, same time. And yet in appearance we are nothing alike. Now that itself is very fascinating to me. Almost as much as the fact that so many of us don't care to take time to notice this tiny world, never mind look closer. In fact, sadly the 'subject' is often immediately squished on sight before one has time to even think to take a look at its 'victim'.

Isn't it fascinating that these two worlds although existing in same place and at the same time, are so disconnected from each other? We don't take time to notice them-and they don't even know we exist.

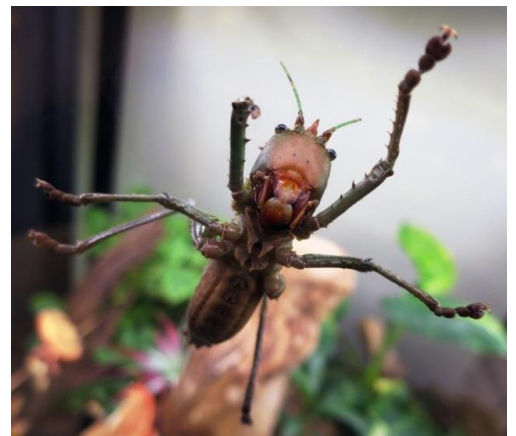
Since a very young age, I was always interested in nature and loved animals. Spending time outside among trees was a favourite activity of mine, enough so that growing up I always wanted to live in a forest. And am not ashamed to say I still do. The photography aspect of it however, started a little later. It first began with me just spending time in my backyard, finding insects and trying to take pictures of them. Mostly for fun.

Hobby grew stronger once I looked through the pictures of my 'models' afterwards. Completely amazed at how one can look both incredibly fascinating and frightening at the same time. And also at the fact that how well my camera can capture it.

Soon I started finding more and more garden bugs, and different kind of spiders. All of them became my volunteer models. That is how this hobby of mine came to life. Ever since then, it's a work in progress.



“JAWS! The Garden Edition” or ‘a Bee from the front’.



Injured ‘mystery creature’ through the glass. Found at Royal Alberta Museum. Quite large.



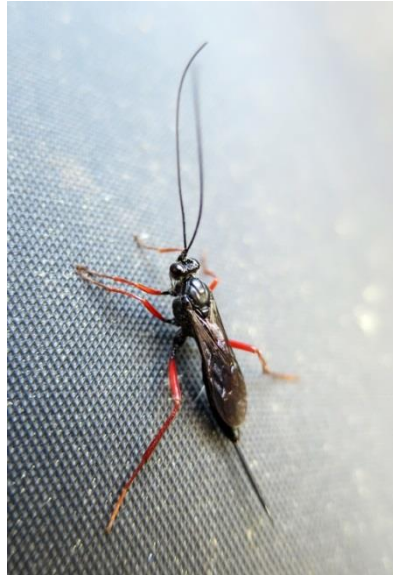
Jewel Spider or ‘Cat-Faced’ Spider (*Araneus Gemmoides*), walking in our yard.



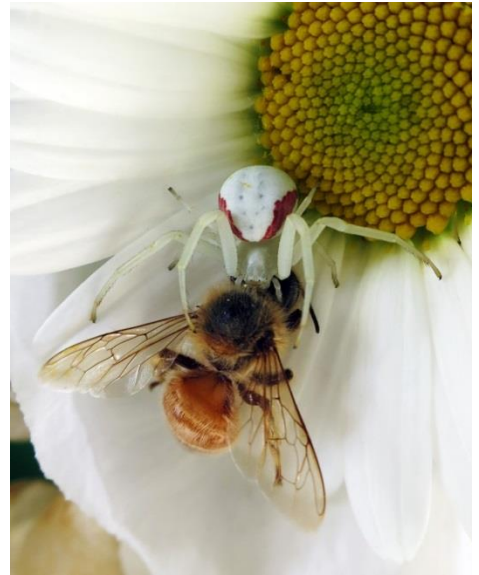
‘Stone Centipede’ (from order *Lithobiomorpha*)
Found inside the house.



Harvestman (*Opiliones*) not a spider.
Walking on a garden flower.



Black Giant Ichneumonid Wasp
(*Megarhyssa*). Spotted in backyard.



Goldenrod Crab Spider or Flower (Crab) Spider
(*Misumena vatia*). Female. Having a bee for lunch on
a garden flower.

Now one of my goals is to travel to some unique places (like Australia/parts of Asia/South America) and photograph as many of them as I can find! It will not be today or this year perhaps, and I doubt any of the creatures are very excited about my plans, But I can't wait to 'meet them'. And show you.



Female House Spider
(*Parasteatoda tepidariorum*),
with her egg sac. By our door.



House Spider. Barn Funnel Weaver (*Tegenaria domestica*)
Photographed in the basement, with its shadow.



Zebra Jumping Spider (*Salticus Scenicus*). Very small
and can jumpy. Found near my front door.



A Jumping Spider has a fly for lunch.
Photographed in Peru.



Jewel Spider or 'Cat-Faced' Spider (*Araneus*
Gemmoides). Spotted walking on our sidewalk.



Leaf-curling Sac Spider (*Clubiona*)
on a leaf of a garden succulent plant.



Orb Weaver Spider (*Araneidae*). Picture taken at Elk Island Retreat, Alberta.



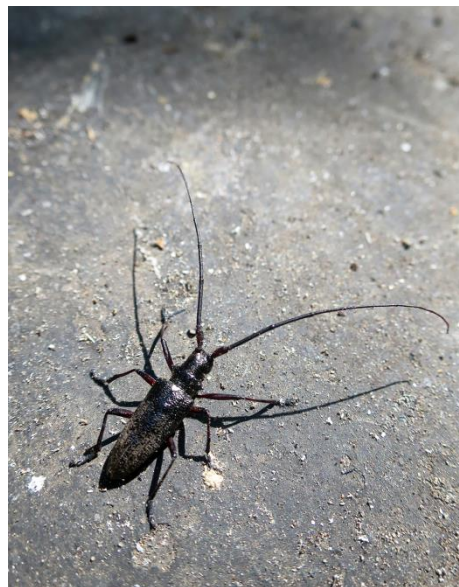
MALE (Left) & **FEMALE** (Right) Goldenrod Crab Spider or Flower (Crab) Spider (*Misumena vatia*)
Females are much larger in size, compared to males.

Some useful tips for an insect photography:

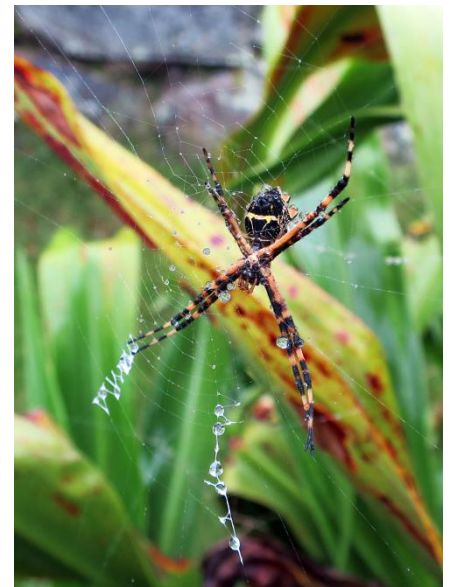
- 1) Look around you and notice the 'tiny wild world'.
- 2) Move slow so you don't scare the insects away. (They fly and run away very fast)!
- 3) Focus on the eyes, they must be sharp.
- 4) As long as the 'model' is sitting still, take as much pictures as you can, check later, because they can change pose/hide in a second.
- 5) You can increase your chances of finding the insects by learning about their preferred habitat, or favorite flowers.
- 6) If you are shooting outside, there is very little background control, but if the insect is inside the house (like a house spider) - the shadow can look very interesting and can add drama to your photo.
- 8) If at first you don't succeed, don't give up, keep going. There will always be more bugs out there for you to discover and photograph.
- 7) Good luck, have fun and be ready to be surprised of what your camera just captured!



The community of Aphids and a Ladybug on the garden flowers. 'Insect World Close-up'



Commonly known as the 'white-spotted sawyer'/'spruce sawyer'/'spruce bug' (*Monochamus scutellatus*). Photograph taken at Slave Lake area, with its shadow.



The underside of a spider. Photograph taken in Peru.