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Insect Classification

The following table shows the traditional classification of the common taxa of garden insects. In total, there are between 26 and 29 living insect orders. The exact number changes over time as new evidence on evolutionary relationships come to light. The majority of people will recognise many of these orders, at least by their common names. Others, such as the Hemiptera, may not be so familiar, but this order includes the aphids, which are known to all gardeners.

Classification table

Sub-Class	Order	Common name
Apteryota: Wingless primitive insects	*Thysanura*	**Silverfish** - more common in damp sheds than in the garden, medium sized, flattened, silvery scaled.
	Collembola	**Springtails** - The most common insect in soil, small, possess a jumping organ, some taxonomists do not include these with the insecta.
Pterygota: Winged insects **Division Exopterygota:** Wings develop externally, and the young (nymphs) look like small, wingless adults.	*Ephemeroptera*	**Mayflies** - Mainly aquatic, found near rivers and ponds, large wings, three "tails", large compound eyes.
	Odonata	**Dragonflies** - acrobatic aerial predators, and very large, grasping "raptorial" jaws to capture prey.
	Orthoptera	**Crickets and grasshoppers** - often found in larger gardens where grass and native trees are allowed to go a little wild, feeds on plants.

Dermaptera	**Earwigs** - found under rocks in most gardens, elongate and dorso-ventrally flattened.	
Hemiptera	**True bugs** - feed on plant sap, using their specialised piercing, sucking mouthparts, can be large.	
Pterygota: winged insects **Division Endopterygota:** The larvae look very different to the adults, and undergo metamorphosis in a pupa where the wings develop internally.	*Neuroptera*	**Lacewings** - common predators of other insects, including aphids, relatively large wings
	Coleoptera	**Beetles** - the most diverse group of organisms on Earth, some are important predators of garden pests
	Diptera	**True flies** - recognised by having just one pair wings, the second pair are modified into halteres, which act as balancing organs.
	Lepidoptera	**Butterflies and moths** - the most easily recognised garden insects, herbivorous larvae (caterpillars) feed on plants, adult feed on nectar through a long proboscis
	Hymenoptera	**Bees, ants and wasps** - critically important pollinators in every garden, many small wasps are parasitic, others induce galls on plants. Some show very complex social behaviors.

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