



Tiny Critters, Big Adventures

The Magic of Getting Kids Outside



DID YOU KNOW?

Health experts recommend at least two hours of outdoor play for children each day.

Getting kids outside does not have to be complicated. Sometimes all it takes is a magnifying glass and a patch of grass. The backyard is full of tiny wonders just waiting to be found!

WHY OUTDOOR PLAY IS ESSENTIAL

- ✔ **Builds healthy bodies.** Running, climbing, and crawling strengthen muscles, bones, and coordination. Sunlight provides essential vitamin D.
- ✔ **Sparks curiosity & learning.** Nature is a living classroom. Kids learn to observe, hypothesize, and ask questions — the foundation of scientific thinking.
- ✔ **Reduces stress & anxiety.** Green spaces and natural settings lower cortisol levels and improve mood, focus, and emotional regulation in children.
- ✔ **Supports attention & focus.** Unstructured outdoor play has been shown to improve attention spans and reduce symptoms of ADHD.
- ✔ **Builds social skills.** Outdoor group activities encourage cooperation, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution.

"What kind of bug is this?"

GROWN-UP TIP

It's okay if you don't know what every bug is. Wondering together helps children build curiosity and confidence. Try saying: "I'm not sure—let's find out!"



KEEP THE ADVENTURE GOING

After your bug hunt:

- Read a bug-themed book together
- Make a bug drawing at home
- Count how many legs each bug had
- Build a pretend bug habitat with blocks or recycled materials

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HOW TO RUN A BUG HUNT

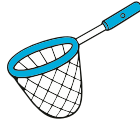
What to bring:



Magnifying glass



Clear jar or bug box



Butterfly net



Small paintbrush



Field notebook



Bug identification guide



Crayons or pencils



Step-by-step hunt guide:

- 1 Pick a patch. Gardens, parks, woodpiles, flower beds, and leaf litter are great spots. Shady, damp areas are bug-rich!
- 2 Move slowly & quietly. Lift rocks and logs gently. Look under leaves and in bark crevices. Replace everything you move!
- 3 Observe before touching. Use a brush to gently guide bugs into a jar. Count legs, look at wings, note colors and size.
- 4 Draw & describe it. Sketch the bug in your notebook. Write where you found it and what it was doing.
- 5 Release & reflect. Always let bugs go where you found them. Talk about what you saw. What was surprising?

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR CURIOUS KIDS

- ? What can you see if you look really closely?
- ? How is this bug different from the last one you saw?
- ? What do you think it eats, and how does it find its food?

- ? How do you think it protects itself from bigger animals?
- ? How do you think this bug helps the plants and trees around us?
- ? If you were this tiny, what would the world look like to you?



Insect Field Guide

Meet the Spotted Lanternfly

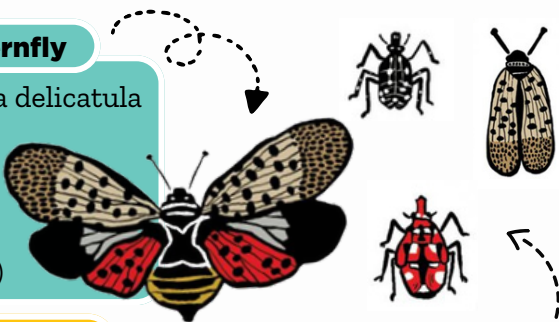
Scientific name: *Lycorma delicatula*

Origin: Eastern Asia

Size: About 1 inch long

Status: Not from Ohio

(Invasive Species)



What is an invasive species?

An invasive species is a plant or bug that comes from another place and spreads too much. It can hurt the plants and animals that live here.

What does it look like?

- Gray wings with black spots
- Bright red wings underneath
- Young ones are black with white spots
- Older young ones are red with white spots

Citizen Scientist Mission!

Did you find one?

You can help protect nature!

- ✓ Draw it in your bug journal
- ✓ Tell a grown-up right away
- ✓ If safe, a grown-up can remove it
- ✓ Report the sighting together



You are helping real scientists learn more about this insect!

**Want to
learn more
or report a
sighting?**



Action for Children



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