

## Insect Jokes Uncommon Comedic Fare



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Jokes about insects are rather rare. There is probably a very good reason for that: Most people don't see much humor in insects. We find it difficult to laugh at creatures that we don't like or understand.

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We tell all kinds of stories about farm animals, dogs, cats and talking parrots. Let two examples suffice. Do you know how to tell if you have a stupid dog? It chases parked cars. What do you call memory loss in a parrot? Polynesia.

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Turpin:

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Now?](#)

While insect jokes are not common, they do exist. One of the early entomologists here at Purdue University, J. J. Davis, liked good insect stories. He collected some of his favorites and compiled them in a 1937 book *The Entomologists' Joke Book*, with the subtitle *Humorous writings and comments wittingly and unwittingly written of an otherwise highly important science*.

Davis' book included a number of stories about insects and of entomologists that could be considered humorous, at least by some people. His sources were tales he had heard or read in newspapers, popular magazines or publications devoted to agriculture and insect science. One frequently referenced source in Davis' book is *Entomological News*, a periodical that has been published by The American Entomological Society since 1890.

The joke book is divided into chapters. The first is titled "Lepidopterous Episodes" and includes moth and butterfly

material. There's a preacher joke:

The minister was visiting at Buddie's house. At the dinner table Bud said: "Pa, are caterpillars good to eat?"

"No, Buddie, what makes you ask such a question?"

"I saw one on Reverend Smith's lettuce, and now it's gone."

A young bride joke:

Young Bride: "If this is an all-wool rug, why is it labeled cotton?"

Salesman: "In order to fool the moths."

And a joke about the word "lepidoptera":

"I understand, Mrs. Grassey, that your son has become quite an eminent lepidopterist."

"Mercy on us! It ain't nothing like a kleptomaniac, is it?"

That joke was first published in the *Entomological News*. Here are three more from the same source:

Eve hung out her wash to dry and a caterpillar ate it. (1908)

Nell: "How old does Miss Antique say she is?" Belle: "She doesn't say; but I've heard her speak of several distinct crops of 17-year locusts." (1905)

First Katydid: "Why didn't you come before?"

Second Katydid: "Were you calling?"

First Katydid: "Was I calling? Don't you see how hoarse my legs are?" (1904)



[katydid](#)

Another chapter is titled "Orthopterologically Speaking" and includes grasshoppers, katydids and crickets. These insects use their legs and/or wings to produce sound.

Here's a story about crickets:

An old farmer and his wife lived near the village church. One warm Sunday evening, while they sat dozing on the porch, the crickets set up a loud chirping.



[house cricket](#)

"I just love to hear that chirping noise," said the old man drowsily. And before the crickets had stopped he was fast asleep.

Soon after, the church choir broke into a beautiful chant.

"Just listen to that," exclaimed his wife; "ain't it beautiful?"

"Yes," murmured the old farmer sleepily, "They do it with their hind legs."

Even the venerable old *Life Magazine* was not above including an insect story. Following is an example.

Armyworm: "Why are you following that man?" Cutworm: "He has a seed catalog under his arm."

There are ant jokes: Ants are supposed to be the hardest-working creatures in the world. Yet they seem to have time to attend all picnics.

Fleas also jump into a joke or two:

You can't teach a flea tricks by using a whip because he's used to rawhide.

The tragedy of the flea is that he knows for a certainty that all of his children will go to the dogs.

Speaking of dogs and fleas, here's one that has made the Internet: Why is it illegal to take dogs to a flea circus?

They'll end up stealing the show!

Hey, I never made the claim that insect jokes were all thigh slappers!

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