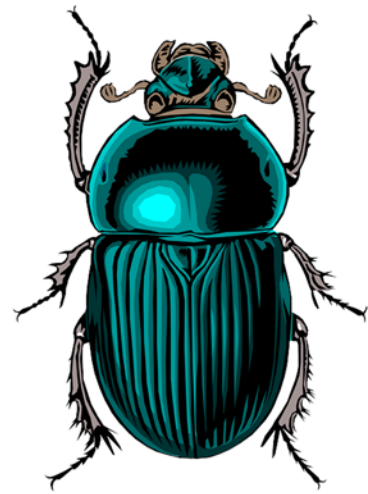


Name _____

Dung Beetles: Nature's Cleanup Crew

Dung beetles are fascinating insects that play an important role in our ecosystems as nature's cleanup crew. These remarkable creatures are known for their unique habit of rolling and burying balls of dung, which is animal waste or poop. While it might sound a little strange, dung beetles actually help keep the environment clean and healthy.



What Do Dung Beetles Look Like?

Dung beetles come in various shapes and sizes, but they typically have strong bodies and legs. They are usually shiny and black, brown, or metallic green in color. Some species have horns on their heads, which they use to fight for the best dung. Their appearance can vary depending on where they live and what they eat.

Why Do They Love Dung?

Dung beetles have a special fondness for dung because it serves as their primary source of food. Dung is rich in nutrients, and dung beetles feed on it to get the energy they need to live. They are like recycling experts in the animal world because they turn waste into something useful.

How Do They Roll Dung Balls?

Dung beetles have a unique way of dealing with dung. When they find a fresh pile of it, they roll it into a ball using their strong front legs. They can be quite strong for their size, and some dung beetles can roll dung balls that are much larger than themselves. Once they've rolled the dung ball, they bury it in the ground. This not only provides them with food but also helps recycle the nutrients in the dung, benefiting the soil and plants.

Why Are They Important?

Dung beetles are essential for several reasons. First, they help to break down and remove animal waste from the environment. This prevents the buildup of waste, which can be harmful and smelly. Second, by burying dung, they improve the soil quality by adding nutrients to it. Third, they are helpful for farmers because they reduce the number of pests that can harm crops. So, dung beetles are like nature's cleanup crew and farmers' little helpers.

Where Can You Find Dung Beetles?

Dung beetles can be found all over the world, from forests to grasslands and even deserts. They live in places where there are animals producing dung, so you can often find them in areas with lots of wildlife. Some species are active during the day, while others come out at night, working tirelessly to keep our environment clean and healthy.

In conclusion, dung beetles may not be the most glamorous insects, but they are incredibly important for the environment. They recycle dung, help improve soil quality, and assist farmers in protecting their crops. So, the next time you see a dung beetle rolling a ball of dung, remember that they are nature's cleanup crew, quietly working to keep our world clean.

Name _____

Dung Beetles: Nature's Cleanup Crew

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What are dung beetles, and why are they called "nature's cleanup crew"?
2. What do dung beetles typically look like?
3. Why do dung beetles love dung, and what do they do with it?
4. How do dung beetles roll and use dung balls?
5. Why are dung beetles important for the environment and farmers?