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opening extract from

RSPB My First Book of Garden Bugs

written by

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published by

A & C Black Publishers Ltd

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Minibeast magic

Minibeasts are hopping, buzzing, crawling and wriggling all over your garden. But you might not see them all at once. It helps if you know where to look.

Take a bug's eye look at your lawn. Lots of minibeasts live in the grass or burrow through the soil below. Try lying on your tummy and seeing what you can spot.

Minibeasts can be hard to see among the leaves. Explore the bushes and borders to see what is lurking in the greenery.

Take a peek under rocks and logs. Some minibeasts like the damp and the darkness. Make sure you put them back carefully afterwards.

Keep an eye on the sky. All kinds of minibeasts take to the air as they go about their business. Watch where they land, then sneak up for a closer look.



Are you ready to meet some minibeasts? Read the clues on each Guess who! page and see if you can work out which bug is hiding there.

You'll find the answer on the following page.

How many legs?

There are thousands of different kinds of minibeasts. Each kind belongs to one of several different groups. You can tell the groups apart by counting their legs.



All insects have six legs.



All spiders have eight legs.



Anything with more than eight legs is not a spider or an insect.



Slugs and snails have no legs at all — just one big foot.



Who is it?

Oh dear! Somebody seems to be stuck in a hole.
Can you see that furry bottom struggling to get out?
Buzz, buzz, buzz! It sounds rather annoyed.

But who is it?

Bumblebee

It's a bumblebee. But she wasn't stuck. She was just visiting her nest. Now she is looking for flowers full of sweet nectar to drink. A female bumblebee sleeps all winter. In spring, she sets out to find a snug place to lay her eggs. An old mouse hole is perfect.





Who is it?

There's an old brown leaf curled up on the stinging nettles. Or is it?

Look closer. Leaves don't have legs.

Could something be hiding there?

Peacock butterfly

A-ha! It's a peacock butterfly.

This insect can be hard to spot. Its folded wings look just like a dead leaf. But what beautiful colours when it opens its wings! Those bold round markings are pretend eyes. They help to scare away hungry birds that might want to eat it.





Who is it?

Yuk! There's something sticky and frothy on the long grass.

It looks like a blob of spit. Look closer. Lots more are scattered about.

What are they?

Froghopper

That froth is called cuckoo spit.
Take a peek inside. You'll find a tiny insect called a froghopper.
It grows up safely inside the froth, then crawls out as an adult and hops away. Just like a miniature frog.





Who is it?

Look closely at these leaves. Something's hiding on the other side, hoping that you won't spot it. Its neat, little body is shaped like a shield.

What do you think it is?



Green shield bug

A green shield bug sucks sap from plants. That shield on its back makes it hard to spot among the leaves. Under the shield are two wings, ready to open up and fly away.

Its other name is stink bug. Don't touch it, or you might find out why!