



Class Insecta, Insects

Order Neuroptera, Lacewings, mantids and others

Neuroptera means “nerve wings” and refers to the hundreds of veins in their wings. The order Neuroptera is comprised of several small families. Larvae are mostly predaceous or parasitic and adults are usually predaceous. Some families are uncommon while others are present more in the south and west. All neuropterans have chewing mouthparts.

Mantidflies

Family Mantispidae

Description and life history: These insects resemble mantids in that they have an elongated prothorax and enlarged front legs for grasping prey. They have long antennae and clear membranous wings with green veins and margins and a wingspan of approximately 25 mm. They hold their wings over their body like a roof.

Prey species: Adults and larvae are predaceous. The larvae of some mantispid species feed on egg sacs of spiders, while others prey on the larvae of wasps and bees. These insects are nocturnal and can be found near the nests of bees and wasps.



Mantidfly adults feed on small soft-bodied insects. (351)
Photo: David Laughlin