



Imagine an insect that looks like a cross between a cricket and a mole, with front legs that look like miniature bulldozers. That's our friend, the mole cricket, a creature as interesting as it is unique. They aren't very big, usually around 1 to 2 inches in length, and are usually brownish in color. A couple of their unique features are their sturdy front legs designed for digging, and their long antennae that help them sense their surroundings.



Speaking of surroundings, mole crickets don't live just anywhere. They prefer inhabiting warm, moist places, and you can often find them underground in fields, gardens, or near water bodies. Their super strong front legs, remember the mini bulldozers, help them dig intricate tunnels in the soil. And guess what? This is where they spend most of their lives, cozy and hidden away.

Now, you might be wondering, 'What does our friend eat while living underground?' Well, these little diggers are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and other small creatures. Their diet includes roots, grasses, insects, and even their own kind if food is scarce! When it comes to their life cycle, they start as eggs, become nymphs (think of it as the teenage stage for insects), and then grow into adults, all within a year's time.

Our final stop on this journey is to understand how these critters interact with us and the world around them. While they might seem scary to some, mole crickets aren't harmful to humans at all. However, they can sometimes be a nuisance to farmers and gardeners because they love munching on plant roots. To protect themselves from predators, mole crickets can both fly and burrow quickly into the ground - a dual escape plan, how cool is that!



**Solve each problem.****Use the article to answer the question.**

- 1) What color are mole crickets?
 - A. red
 - B. green
 - C. yellow
 - D. brown
- 2) What defense will mole crickets do to protect themselves from predators?
 - A. play dead
 - B. fly away
 - C. spit venom
 - D. camouflage themselves
- 3) What are mole cricket's unique features?
 - A. wings and sharp claws
 - B. horns and sharp fangs
 - C. bright colors
 - D. sturdy front legs designed for digging
- 4) Are mole crickets harmful to humans?
 - A. no, not usually
 - B. yes, when they are nymphs
 - C. yes, when they are adults
 - D. yes, at all ages
- 5) How long does it take for mole crickets to become adults?
 - A. one day
 - B. one week
 - C. one month
 - D. one year
- 6) What do mole crickets use their front legs for?
 - A. swimming
 - B. jumping
 - C. fighting
 - D. digging
- 7) Where do mole crickets prefer to live?
 - A. warm, moist places
 - B. cold, dry places
 - C. dry, barren places
 - D. hot, humid places
- 8) What do mole crickets use their front legs for?
 - A. Climbing trees
 - B. Catching insects
 - C. Digging tunnels
 - D. Creating holes in trees
- 9) About how large are mole crickets?
 - A. Around 2 inches
 - B. Larger than 6 inches
 - C. Microscopic
 - D. About 1 foot
- 10) What do mole crickets eat?
 - A. only plants
 - B. only other mole crickets
 - C. only insects and spiders
 - D. plants and other small creatures

Determine if the statements is something the animal would say (W) or it it is not something the animal would say (N).

- 11) "I enjoy the dry and cold places."
- 12) "We mole crickets hate to stay hidden."



- 13) "My front legs are just right for digging through the soil. They are my personal bulldozers!"
- 14) "We mole crickets are really big, around 4 to 5 inches in length."
- 15) "I never eat other insects, that's gross."
- 16) "We live in the harsh cold of the mountains."
- 17) "I often hide myself in the soil, in fields and gardens. It's cozy and safe."
- 18) "My life cycle is quite rapid. I start as an egg and become an adult in just a year."
- 19) "Size isn't everything. I'm only about an inch or two long, but I'm mighty in my own way!"
- 20) "I live for many years, almost as long as a human."
- 21) "I absolutely dislike staying near water bodies."
- 22) "Farmers and gardeners love us, we help their plants grow."
- 23) "I'm a bit picky about where I settle. I like places that are warm and moist. They make the best homes!"
- 24) "I prefer eating fruits and vegetables."
- 25) "Although I won't harm you, I can be a nuisance to farmers and gardeners. Beware of my munching habit!"
- 26) "Sometimes, if food is scarce, I might have to eat other mole crickets. It's not something I prefer."
- 27) "When I'm not digging, I'm eating. I enjoy a good mix of roots, grasses, and even bugs."
- 28) "We are dangerous and harmful to humans."
- 29) "You won't believe it, but I can actually fly. A flying bulldozer, that's quite a sight."
- 30) "No need to be scared of me. I won't hurt you. I just like digging in the soil."

Determine if the statement is a fact or opinion based on the information in the article.

- 31) The life cycle of a mole cricket goes from egg to nymph to adult all within a year.
- 32) It's gross that mole crickets eat other mole crickets.
- 33) Mole crickets eat plants, insects and sometimes even their own kind.
- 34) It is amazing that mole crickets can live underground most of their lives.
- 35) Mole crickets usually live in warm, moist places like gardens, fields or near water bodies.
- 36) It's amazing that mole crickets can both fly and dig underground to protect themselves.
- 37) Mole crickets can be a problem for farmers and gardeners because they eat plant roots.
- 38) Most of the time, mole crickets live underground in tunnels that they dig themselves.
- 39) Mole crickets ability to dig intricate tunnels is incredible.
- 40) Mole crickets are fascinating because their front legs look like mini bulldozers.

Determine if the statement is true or false.

- 41) Mole crickets can escape danger by flying.
- 42) Mole crickets are harmful to humans.
- 43) Mole crickets will eat plant roots.



- 66) Protect their habitat by not using harmful pesticides.
- 67) I can't believe mole crickets eat other mole crickets!
- 68) Please be gentle and let the mole crickets go if you find them.



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| 1. <u> D </u> | 26. <u> true </u> | 51. <u> D </u> |
| 2. <u> B </u> | 27. <u> true </u> | 52. <u> D </u> |
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| 4. <u> A </u> | 29. <u> true </u> | 54. <u> D </u> |
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| 24. <u> false </u> | 49. <u> true </u> | |
| 25. <u> true </u> | 50. <u> true </u> | |



12) "We mole crickets hate to stay hidden." (paragraph 2)