

Crazy Critters!

**A free 3-minute
presentation**



This week we are looking at some crazy critters that live on St. Martin. This is a coneheaded grasshopper and they can be brown or green.



This is a mantidfly and it looks a bit like a praying mantis, but isn't related to them at all. The shape of the front legs evolved independently.



This is a mole cricket, a type of cricket that spends almost its entire life underground eating plant roots. You can see how its front feet are shaped for digging.



Here is a forest katydid that spends its days hiding and comes out at night to eat leaves.



This is an ensign wasp, which lays its eggs in the egg cases of cockroaches.



We have at least two scorpions on St. Martin, but most of the time we don't see them. If you have a blacklight, you can see something unusual, because...



...most scorpions glow!



This is a pretty odd critter. What do you think it is?



It is actually the larva of a beautiful tortoise beetle.



Lacewings start off their life in eggs that are laid on stalks.



Their larvae are fierce hunters and many of them use a strange form of camouflage: they put the empty exoskeletons of the insects they have eaten on their backs.



The adults are quite pretty and are closely related to the mantidfly we saw earlier.



Aphids are tiny insects that live on plant juices and face many threats. This ladybug larva loves eating them.



So does strange insect. What is it? It is actually the larva of this...



...a fly that pretends it is a bee.



Even creepier, there are tiny, tiny wasps that lay eggs in live aphids. The larvae live inside the aphids...



...and eventually hatch out. The yellow orange aphids are healthy and the brown/purple ones have been parasitized. These wasps probably just hatched out of the aphids they are standing on.



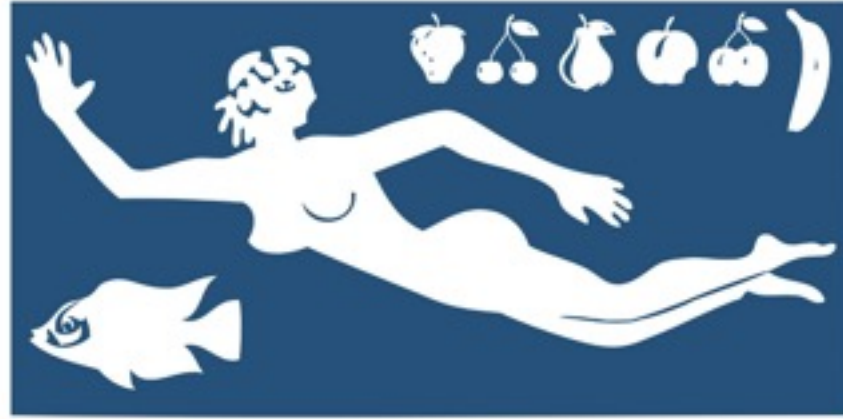
Many people are uncertain what this insect is. Some people think it can bite or sting. In fact, it is harmless and it is a moth. But, it is a mimic of a wasp...



The wasp it mimics is called a tarantula hawk and the females will dig a burrow, paralyze a tarantula and then put the tarantula in the burrow and lay an egg in it. When the egg hatches, the wasp larva will eat the tarantula.



Of course, tarantulas are also venomous. This pair ended up killing each other at the same time, the wasp stinging the tarantula and the tarantula biting the wasp. There are countless strange stories in the insect world.



**LES FRUITS
DE MER**