Life under a Log: Critter ID



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American Toad: These toads can live all over the United States. They can live up to 10 years in the wild, and they shed their skin every few weeks while they are still growing. They eat insects and lay their eggs in fresh water.

Carpenter Ant: These ants are ¼ to ¾ inch in length and black (sometimes red) in color. They naturally live in dead logs and eat insects, honeydew from aphids and plant juices.

Centipede: These arthropods are reddishbrown in color and are generally about one inch in length. They feed on live insects and do not damage plants.

Garter Snake: These small common snakes live in a variety of habitats and prey primarily on worms and amphibians.

Ground Beetle: There are many different species of ground beetles that differ slightly in appearance, although most are black. They are most active at night and they eat insects, which makes them beneficial to agriculture.

Harvestman: Often call Daddy Long Legs; harvestmen are neither spiders nor insects. Over 6,400 different species have been discovered world wide. They are omnivorous, eating small insects as well as decaying plant and fungal matter.

Leopard Slug: These slugs eat plants, the remains of dead animals, fungus, and other slugs. They are mostly nocturnal and like damp shady places. They have four antennae on their head: two long and two short.

Millipede: Common species of millipedes have between 80 and 400 legs. They are powerful burrowers and eat plant material.

Mycelium (mi se'le em): This branching structure is the underground part of a fungus. The mushrooms that we see above ground are the fruiting bodies of these underground organisms.

Red Backed Salamander: These salamanders live their whole lives in forests throughout eastern North America. They require a moist environment since they breathe partly through their skin. They eat insects, bugs, and spiders and they lay their eggs in freshwater ponds close to or in the forest.

Red Eft: This is the middle life stage of the Eastern Spotted Newt. Its larval (newborn) stage is aquatic (lives in fresh water), until it emerges and lives in a forest for 1-3 years as a red eft. Then the newt changes again into their aquatic adult stage. They eat insects, mollusks and crustaceans, and even young amphibians and frog eggs.

Sow Bug: This isopod is a scavenger and feeds on dead and decaying plants and animals. They breathe with gills and therefore need to live in a wet environment.

Subterranean Termite: These white softbodied termites are the workers in a termite colony. They are responsible for caring for eggs, constructing tunnels, foraging for food, and feeding and grooming other colony members. They eat cellulose, which is found in wood.

Turkey Tail: This is one of the most common types of bracket fungi that are found in the forest. They are important decomposers of wood, helping to recycle the nutrients in the wood back in to the soil.

Worm: There are over 4000 species of worms worldwide. They help to aerate the soil and return essential nutrients from rotting plant material back to the soil.