

GAUDY GRASSHOPPER

(Leichhardt's Grasshopper)

gaudy acacia grasshopper
native to Australia

Phylum: ARTHROPODA
Class: HEXAPODA
Order: Orthoptera
Family: Acrididae



The Gaudy Grasshopper

The gaudy grasshopper is one of the most spectacular grasshoppers in the world. It calls the Northern Territory of Australia home. This colorful grasshopper is bright red, blue and orange. Its vibrant colors are a defense against predators, and it works so well that it makes the grasshopper a bit overconfident. It doesn't even bother to fly away when predators approach. The color also serves as a warning that this grasshopper tastes awful.

The gaudy grasshopper is named after explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, who reported great numbers of them as he crossed Australia's remote Arnhem Land plateau in 1845. However, a few years later, Leichhardt's Grasshopper mysteriously disappeared and was gone for 125 years. It didn't come back until 1973!

GRASSHOPPER FACTS

- There are 18,000 different kinds of grasshoppers in the world.
- Grasshoppers are herbivores.
- Grasshoppers go through incomplete metamorphosis
- Grasshoppers have no ears. They hear with an organ called tympanum.
- Most types of grasshoppers have two pairs of wings.
- Grasshoppers have five eyes.
- Some grasshoppers rub their wings together to create music, others snap their wings together while flying, and others just rub their hind legs across their front wings.
- A Grasshopper is an amazing insect that can leap 20 times the length of its own body. If you or I could do that, we would be able to jump almost 40 yards!
- Grasshoppers can be found almost everywhere in the world, except for the colder regions near the North and South poles.
- They live in fields, meadows, and just about anywhere they can find generous amounts of leaves to eat. Some types of grasshoppers will only eat certain types of plants. Others will eat any type of plant they can find.
- Grasshoppers can destroy entire crops of alfalfa, clover, cotton, corn and other grains, causing millions of dollars in crop damages every year.
- When a grasshopper is picked up, they "spit" a brown liquid which is known by most kids and adults as "tobacco juice." Some scientists believe that this liquid may protect grasshoppers from attacks by insects such as ants.