

Friend AND Foe!

Ambush (Assassin) Bug



Ambush bugs are perfectly camouflaged and can **change colour** to match their surroundings. They sit, **motionless**, in a flower, and wait for an insect to come near. They prey on **aphids, flies, caterpillars, beetles, wasps** and, unfortunately are very successful in catching **bees**. So, we sometimes see them as **FOES**.

However, in this picture below an ambush bug is attacking a conopid fly. Conopid flies attack bumble bees or honey bees, pry open the space between the body segments and insert their eggs. The eggs hatch quickly. The larvae feed on the bee, hollowing out its insides. The bee continues to be active until the conopid fly forces it to dig its own grave! The fly spends a year as a pupa in the ground before crawling out of the bee abdomen as an adult fly. And so, ambush bugs are also **FRIENDS!**



Images: Elaine Sedgman

Sources:

Missouri Department of Conservation. Field Guide, Ambush Bugs - <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/ambush-bugs>

Kahl, H and Kuder, L. Conopid Flies: The Bumble Bee Body Snatcher. 2017. University of Maryland – Department of Entomology. <https://entomology.umd.edu/news/conopid-flies-the-bumble-bee-body-snatchers>