

# Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

## **Black mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*)**

Family: Blackflies (*Tenebrionidae*)

Genus: *Tenebrio*

Species: Black flour beetle (*Tenebrio molitor*)

The black mealworm (scientific name: *Tenebrio molitor*) is an insect belonging to





the family of mealworms and is widespread throughout the world. It is known as both an agricultural pest and an important animal for livestock. It is about 12–18 mm long. Its body is flat-oval in shape. Although the newly hatched insects are light brown, over time their color darkens to a shiny black or dark brown. These larvae, popularly known as "mealworms", are yellowish-golden in color, have a solid body and a worm-like shape. They can

reach a length of up to 25 mm. The black mealworm is an insect that undergoes complete metamorphosis.

The female insect lays hundreds of sticky eggs in flour or grain. The "mealworms" that hatch from the eggs feed and grow rapidly. After completing their development, the larva passes into the pupal stage. The pupa emerges as a winged but usually flightless adult insect. They love dark, damp and warm places (for example, granaries, mills, bakeries). They not only eat food, but also spoil the product with their shells, excrement and larval remains.

Live Food: "Mealworms" are very rich in protein and fat. Therefore, they are bred all over the world as the main live food for aquarium fish, birds, reptiles (lizards, turtles) and some rodents. They are widely used in laboratories for various biological



experiments. If you come across these insects in the kitchen. Throw away infected flour, cereal or legume products immediately. Vacuum up flour residues remaining in the corners of cabinets. The safest way is to store newly purchased dry food in tightly closed glass jars, not in plastic bags. The larvae of the black mealworm (mealworms) have the ability to eat and digest some types of plastic, such as polystyrene (foam plastic). This property is being investigated for future use in the biological destruction of plastic waste.

