

## Fossil found of giant car-sized insect

23rd December, 2021



If you are afraid of insects, this might be difficult reading. A fossil found on a beach in England shows that the biggest bug that ever lived was the size of a small car. The fossil is of a giant millipede. This monster creature could have had

hundreds of legs. Although the name "millipede" means "one thousand legs" in Latin, few species actually have 1,000 feet. There is one species that can have 1,300 legs. The fossil hunters in England said what they found is "definitely the biggest bug that ever lived". They said the millipede was around 2.7 metres long and weighed over 50kg. This would have been a scary sight. It would need a huge amount of insect spray to keep it away.

The scientists found the fossil by chance. A lecturer at the University of Cambridge's department of earth sciences said they found a rock on the beach. It had recently fallen from a cliff. He said: "It was a complete fluke of a discovery. It was an incredibly exciting find." He explained that the fossil dates back over 326 million years. This was 100 million years before the Age of the Dinosaurs. The researchers believe that the millipede had a high-nutrient diet because it was so huge. They said: "While we can't know for sure what they ate, there were plenty of nutritious nuts and seeds available...at the time." They may also have eaten frogs and lizards, but not humans (or any of our ancient ancestors).

Sources: [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) / [phys.org](http://phys.org) / [sky.com](http://sky.com)

### Writing

People who are afraid of insects should get help to overcome their fear. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

afraid / insects / insects / fossil / small car / millipede / legs / species / scary / spray scientists / rock / beach / cliff / discovery / nuts / seeds / frogs / lizards / ancestors

### True / False

- 1) The article says people should not be afraid of insects. T / F
- 2) A fossil of a giant millipede was found inside a small car. T / F
- 3) In Latin, "millipede" means "1,000 legs". T / F
- 4) The millipede from the fossil weighed over 50kg. T / F
- 5) Fossil hunters found the millipede fossil on a beach. T / F
- 6) The fossil is over 300 million years old. T / F
- 7) The Dinosaur Age came 100 million years before the millipede lived. T / F
- 8) The millipede would probably have eaten humans. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>afraid</b>     | a. accidentally  |
| 2. <b>bug</b>        | b. very large    |
| 3. <b>creature</b>   | c. animal        |
| 4. <b>definitely</b> | d. healthy       |
| 5. <b>huge</b>       | e. insect        |
| 6. <b>by chance</b>  | f. very old      |
| 7. <b>discovery</b>  | g. scared        |
| 8. <b>age</b>        | h. find          |
| 9. <b>nutritious</b> | i. without doubt |
| 10. <b>ancient</b>   | j. era           |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What would you do if you saw a car-sized millipede?
- c) What's the scariest insect you've seen?
- d) How would life be different if we had giant insects?
- e) Do you think the giant millipede was dangerous?
- f) What are the most dangerous insects alive today?
- g) What do you think of including insects in our diets?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

## Phrase Match

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. If you are afraid                  | a. of a giant millipede        |
| 2. The fossil is                      | b. chance                      |
| 3. definitely the biggest bug         | c. and lizards                 |
| 4. weighed                            | d. spray                       |
| 5. insect                             | e. back over 326 million years |
| 6. The scientists found the fossil by | f. that ever lived             |
| 7. It had recently fallen             | g. nuts                        |
| 8. the fossil dates                   | h. of insects                  |
| 9. there were plenty of nutritious    | i. from a cliff                |
| 10. They may also have eaten frogs    | j. over 50kg                   |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about millipedes?
- Why are people afraid of insects?
- What insects do you like and dislike?
- What do you think of car-sized insects?
- Why do people like hunting for fossils?
- What do fossils tell us?
- In what ways are insects useful?
- Should scientists use DNA to bring the millipede back?

## Spelling

- A slosif found on a beach
- This monster eurarct
- few isepsec actually have 1,000 feet
- fdteleniyy the biggest bug
- This would have been a csray sight
- a huge amount of insect yrsap
- department of earth iseescnc
- It was a complete fluke of a oiysdcerv
- It was an irnlbceydi exciting find
- the millipede had a high-entritun diet
- nuts and seeds leaiabvla
- any of our ancient eaosnsrct

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. c	4. i	5. b
6. a	7. h	8. j	9. d	10. f

## Role Play

### Role A – Worms

You think worms are the best insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their bugs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): spiders, ants or bees.

### Role B – Spiders

You think spiders are the best insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their bugs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): worms, ants or bees.

### Role C – Ants

You think ants are the best insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their bugs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): spiders, worms or bees.

### Role D – Bees

You think bees are the best insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their bugs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): spiders, ants or worms.

## Speaking – Bugs

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| • Cockroaches | • Millipedes  |
| • Ants        | • Worms       |
| • Bees        | • Butterflies |
| • Spiders     | • Fireflies   |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.