

BUSH BUGS

HELEN MILROY

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YEAR LEVEL: F-2

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander histories and cultures

ABOUT THE BOOK

From the author of the Backyard series and *Bush Birds* comes an exciting picture book about bugs!

This colourful array of Australian insects is sure to delight little ones captivated by all things creepy and crawly. From spiky stick insects to hairy spiders, and from blood-sucking mosquitos to dung-eating blow flies and feasting wasps, this is a fun and easy-to-read book introducing tiny readers to tiny bush critters.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen Milroy is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia. She was born and educated in Perth. Helen has always had a passionate interest in health and wellbeing, especially for children. She is currently a professor at UWA, a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, and Commissioner with the National Mental Health Commission.

THEMES

- Native bugs and wildlife
- Australian bush habitat
- Observing and celebrating nature
- Indigenous art

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

F-2 English

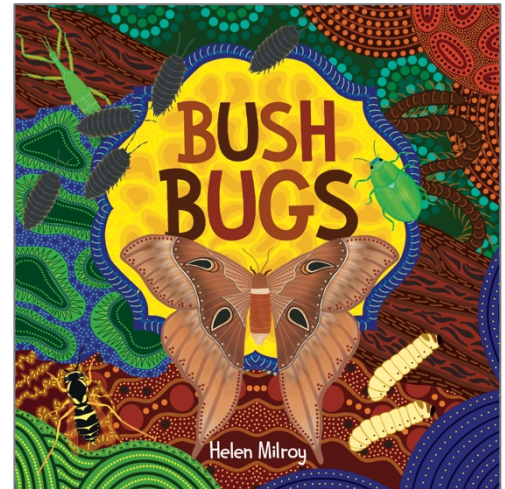
F-2 Biological Sciences

F-2 Visual Art

F-2 Health and Physical Education

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author website: helenmilroy.com
- Australian Museum Insects webpage: australian.museum/learn/animals/insects



CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. How do you feel about bugs? Which ones do you like? Which ones do you dislike?
2. Which bugs can you name on the book's front cover?
3. Have you read any of Helen Milroy's other stories: *Backyard Birds*, *Backyard Bugs*, *Backyard Beasties*, *Bush Birds*, *Owl and Star* or *Crow Baby*?
4. Read the blurb on the back cover of the book. Does it make you want to read the book?
5. Brainstorm different meanings of the word 'bug', such as a bug in a computer system or the action of bugging someone.
6. Witchetty grubs are a type of bush tucker – food traditionally eaten by Indigenous Australians. Have you tried witchetty grubs or any other type of bush tucker? Would you like to?
7. How do you think these bugs got their names:
 - a. jewel bug
 - b. Hercules moth
 - c. Goliath stick insect
8. Can you think of words that rhyme with these words from the story: sucks, eat, scurries, roams, feast, grub, squirms, trap, moth, stick, all. Can you think of words that start with the same sounds?
9. What do these words from the story mean: dung, scurries, roams, squirms, prey.
10. Answer the following literal comprehension questions:
 - a. Is the mosquito a male or female?
 - b. What does blowfly eat?
 - c. Why does slater scurry?
 - d. Does jewel bug move around a lot?
 - e. Who eats spiders and flies?
 - f. Can you eat witchetty grubs?
 - g. Is giant centipede slow or fast?
 - h. How does tarantula catch its dinner?
 - i. What does Hercules moth eat?
 - j. Where are goliath stick insect's spikes?

Science

1. What is the scientific definition of a bug? Does the common use of the term 'bug' differ to this definition? Which bugs from the story are 'true' bugs?
2. Bugs come in all shapes, sizes and colours. Print pictures of a variety of different bugs, including those featured in the book. Practise sorting and grouping the bugs according to their physical features. For example, by wings / no wings or by number of legs.
3. Many bugs use camouflage to protect themselves from predators. How do the bugs in the story use camouflage to hide?
4. Search outside for some safe bugs to observe. You may like to look under logs, in tree bark/branches and near flowers. If possible, observe the bugs using a magnifying glass. Draw and label pictures of any bugs you find. Create a tally to show how many of each type of bug was found.
5. Some bugs go through major changes throughout their lifecycles, while others remain relatively unchanged apart from increasing in size. Compare the lifecycle of two or more bugs from the story, such as the Hercules moth and the tarantula.
6. Label the following parts of a stick insect: abdomen, thorax, head, eyes, mouth, wings, legs, antennae. Modify the activity as needed to suit students' abilities. For example, younger students may match words to an image while older students can copy or write words into blank spaces.
7. Describe the ideal habitat for one of the bugs featured in the story. What does the bug need to survive? Create a habitat diorama or collage.
8. As a group, create a chart or poster that compares the bugs from the story. Include features such as the colour, diet and method of movement.
9. Explore other books or resources about bugs and their diets. Compare the information with what you learned from this text.
10. List some threats to the bush bugs' habitats. How can these habitats be protected?

Creative writing

1. The story is written in rhyming couplets, meaning the last words of two sentences rhyme. For example: 'giant centipede squirms quickly **away**, as tarantula sets up a trap for **prey**.' Can you come up with your own bug-themed rhyming couplet?
2. Describe the bush using your five senses. How would it look, smell, sound, feel and taste?
3. Choose a bug from the book and write down as many adjectives as you can to describe what it looks like, how it sounds and how it acts.
4. The title, *Bush Bugs*, is an example of alliteration as both words start with the same sound. Alliteration is pleasing to hear and is used to make writing more interesting. Can you think of an alliterative phrase for each bug in the story, such as 'terrific tarantula' and 'massive moth'?

Visual art

1. Create your own artwork in the style of Helen Milroy. Combine a printable mandala template and bug colouring in, or create your artwork from scratch.
2. Which is your favourite image from the book? What do you like about it?
3. Use air-dry clay, play dough or plasticine to create a bush bug sculpture.

Health and physical education

1. Practise moving like the bugs featured in the book: scurry like a slater, roam like a jewel bug, squirm like a giant centipede, etc.
2. Create a *Bush Bugs*-themed obstacle course or book walk.
3. Most bugs are harmless to humans. How can people stay safe from those that are potentially harmful?