

The Working Tools of Insects

Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education, may be copied with citation.

Insects are wonderful. You need to look closely to learn about them. If you watch them, you will learn a lot.

I wonder if you know that the smallest insects you see about you, all have tools that were given to them with which they do their work. There is a little fly called a sawfly, because it has a saw to work with. It is really a much nicer saw than you could make, if you were ever so bold.

The fly uses it to make places where the eggs will be safe. What is even more strange is that it has a sort of homemade glue that fastens them where they are laid.

Some insects have cutting instruments that work just as your scissors do. The poppy-bee is one of them, whose work is wonderful. This bee has a boring tool, too. Its nest is usually made in old wood. This borer cleans out the nest to make it ready for use.

When all is ready the insect cuts out pieces of leaves to line the nest and to make the cells. These linings are cut out in the shape of the nest. You would be surprised to see the care taken to have every piece of leaf cut so that it is just the right size, so that it will fit just perfectly. When they are fitted, the pieces are nicely fastened together and put into the nest.

Other animals have tools, too. For example, birds have bills or beaks. They use them to get food. A woodpecker uses its bill to drill into trees. And then the woodpecker gets food. The woodpecker eats insects. So one of the other tools insects need is a way to escape. Some fly, some crawl. They're all part of nature.

Support the Main Idea

What is the main idea of this passage?

Underline five sentences in the passage that support that idea.