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## Dragonfly Life: How They Reproduce

Dragonflies have fascinating and unique ways of reproducing. Their life cycle begins in the water, where they lay eggs, and continues until they transform into skilled adult fliers. Let's learn how dragonflies bring the next generation to life!

Dragonflies start their reproduction journey with an elaborate mating process. Male dragonflies are territorial and often fight off rivals to attract a female. When a male and female are ready to mate, the male uses a special structure at the end of his body to attach to the female. Together, they form a heart-shaped position, which is called the "mating wheel." This process often takes place while they are flying or perched on a plant.

After mating, the female dragonfly lays her eggs in or near water. Some species deposit their eggs directly into the water, while others attach them to plants or underwater debris. A single female dragonfly can lay hundreds of eggs at a time, ensuring the survival of her species.

The eggs hatch into baby dragonflies, called nymphs, within a few weeks. Nymphs live underwater and go through several stages of growth, shedding their skin as they grow larger. They can live underwater for months or even years, depending on the species, before they are ready to become adults.

Dragonflies do not care for their young. Once the female lays her eggs, her job is done. The nymphs must find food and survive on their own in the water. This independence is common for insects, and dragonfly nymphs are well-equipped with hunting skills to catch small creatures in the water.

From the mating wheel to the emergence of adult dragonflies, their reproduction process shows how these insects are perfectly adapted to their environments.