

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## What Does a Praying Mantis Eat?

The praying mantis is a skilled and patient hunter. Unlike some insects that eat plants or a mix of foods, the praying mantis is a carnivore. This means it eats only other animals, mostly insects, to survive. Its diet and hunting techniques make it one of nature's most fascinating predators.

Praying mantises eat a wide variety of insects, such as crickets, flies, grasshoppers, moths, and even spiders.

Larger mantises may also hunt small vertebrates like frogs, lizards, and birds if they have the opportunity. The praying mantis isn't picky about its food—it will eat anything it can catch!

The way a praying mantis hunts is just as amazing as what it eats. Mantises rely on their excellent vision and patience to catch prey. They have large, compound eyes that allow them to see even the smallest movement. Once they spot a target, they stay completely still, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. When the prey gets close enough, the mantis uses its long front legs to grab it with lightning speed. These legs are covered with sharp spines that hold the prey tightly so it can't escape.

Praying mantises are ambush predators, meaning they hide and wait for prey to come to them instead of chasing it. Their camouflage helps them blend into their surroundings, whether they're sitting on a leaf or hiding in a bush. This makes it almost impossible for their prey to notice them before it's too late.

After catching their food, mantises use their strong jaws to chew it. They eat their prey alive, starting with the head or body, depending on the size of the meal. This may sound harsh, but it's an effective way for the mantis to get the energy it needs to survive.

In conclusion, the praying mantis is a carnivorous insect with incredible hunting skills. From using its sharp eyesight to ambushing prey, this insect is a master predator in its ecosystem. Whether it's catching a cricket or even a small lizard, the praying mantis's diet and hunting techniques make it a truly fascinating creature.