

The Insects of Newport Forest

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The "Two-spotted Treehopper" (Echenopa binotatus: Membracidae) is a fairly common treehopper at Newport Forest. Its shape suggests a thorn, when clinging to a darkened branch. photo courtesy of Steven Marshall

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This Red-collared Oil Beetle (Nemognatha nemorensis: Meloidae) captured on the head of a Black-eyed Susan was photographed just two weeks earlier by . . . photo courtesy of Steven Marshall

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The Robber Fly (Laphria [virginica]: Asilidae) is also common at Newport Forest. Robber Flies are predatory, snatching other insects on the wing and making off to a suitable roost for some leisurely dining. The "beard" adorning the face, the elevation of the eyes above the head, and robust construction are field marks for robber flies, generally. (It's hard to invent a "common name" for this critter because there are three rather similar species in E North America.) photo courtesy of Steven Marshall

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Oil or Blister Beetles are notorious for secreting a noxious fluid from leg joints when picked up or disturbed. The oil, called cantharidin, cause blisters to develop on human skin. It is also the main component of "spanish fly," long held to be an aphrodesiac. (A thought just struck me: there is an outside chance that we have photographed the very same individual -- not to mention the same flower!)