

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

For these insects, life begins in the water as a free-living aquatic predator. Larvae (also called a nymph or naiad) prey mainly on other aquatic insects such as mosquito larvae or even other dragonfly larvae. Larger larvae may prey on fish fry (baby fish). In turn, dragonflies are preyed upon by a number of species, including fish and frogs. Many species live among the aquatic vegetation.



DRAGONFLY NAIAD

SIZE |—————|
Up to 1½ inches

Adult dragonflies and damselflies feed mainly on other insects such as small gnats, mosquitoes, black flies, horse flies, and deer flies. Most species hunt during the day, but a few species are evening hunters. One interesting behavioral aspect of dragonflies is their posture. Dragonflies can adjust their orientation, body position, and wing position to regulate their body temperature. Sometimes a dragonfly will position itself so that the tip of its abdomen is pointed at the sun and its wings are rotated down and tipped forward to shade the thorax. The surface of the body directly exposed to the sun is minimized. When the sun is high in the sky, the dragonfly is almost standing on its head. This extreme position is called the "obelisk" posture. If the insect cools too much, it only needs to adjust its wings or body.



ADULT DRAGONFLY

Information from

<http://www.broward.cc.fl.us/~ssimpson/UploadedDragonfly.html>

Picture from

<http://www.americanbrugmansia-daturasociety.org/insect%20pictures.htm>