

Parasitoid

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Parasitoid is a term used for insects that play the role of common parasite. They spend a significant portion of their life cycle in or on other organisms whereas the adult parasitoids are free-living creatures. Unlike their closely-related sister group, the wasp, their needle-like appendage, called ovipositor, is used to lay eggs on or in their victims. The length of the ovipositor ranges from a millimeter up to 10 centimeters. Some species have a longer ovipositor which is 8 times their body length! The length varies depending on the hosts. Some parasitoids use the venom to paralyze their, so called “surrogate mother”, permanently. Parasitoids can be further categorized according to the development of their grubs. Endoparasitoids undergo their life development inside the host whereas ectoparasitoids develop outside the host. Ironically there are some species of parasitoids that are parasitized by other parasitoids (hyperparasitoid). This shows that what goes around comes around. Parasitoids employ two types of attack namely immediate death attack or ‘soft’ killing mode of attack. Species with the first mode of attack will paralyze and kill their hosts immediately after the egg-laying process. The latter mode of attack will allow the hosts to develop further after the parasitization and eventually be killed once the parasitoids emerge and that is the fate of the surrogate mother bearing evil children.



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