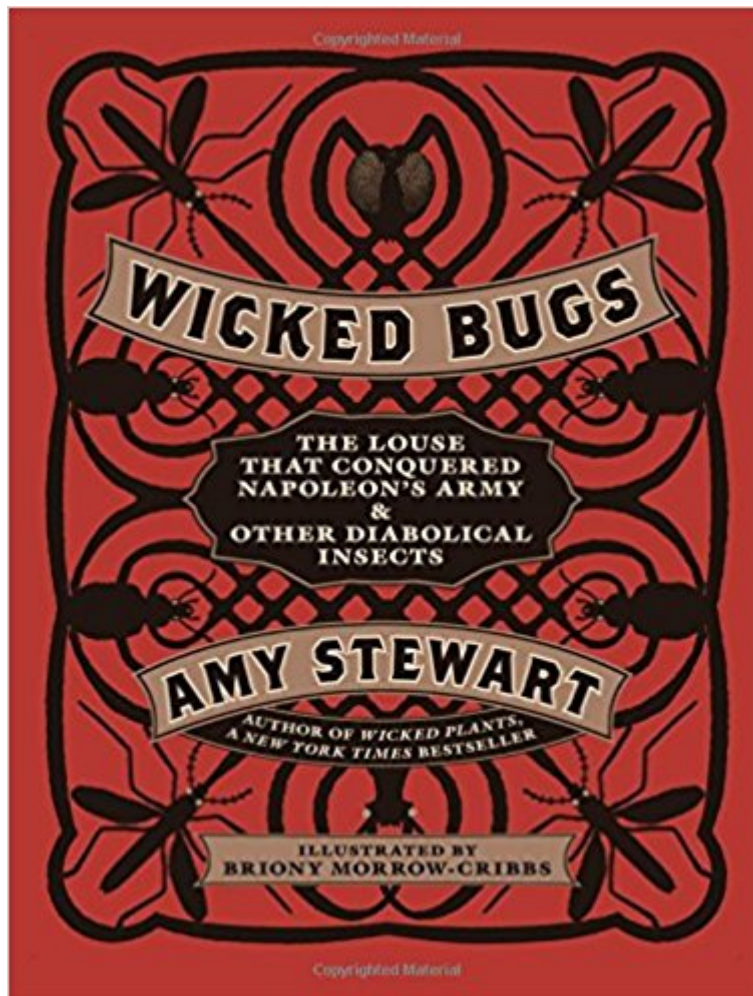




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Wicked Bugs: The Louse That Conquered Napoleon's Army & Other Diabolical Insects



Synopsis

In this darkly comical look at the sinister side of our relationship with the natural world, Stewart has tracked down over one hundred of our worst entomological foes—creatures that infest, infect, and generally wreak havoc on human affairs. From the world's most painful hornet, to the flies that transmit deadly diseases, to millipedes that stop traffic, to the "bookworms" that devour libraries, to the Japanese beetles munching on your roses, *Wicked Bugs* delves into the extraordinary powers of six- and eight-legged creatures. With wit, style, and exacting research, Stewart has uncovered the most terrifying and titillating stories of bugs gone wild. It's an A to Z of insect enemies, interspersed with sections that explore bugs with kinky sex lives ("She's Just Not That Into You"), creatures lurking in the cupboard ("Fear No Weevil"), insects eating your tomatoes ("Gardener's Dirty Dozen"), and phobias that feed our (sometimes) irrational responses to bugs ("Have No Fear"). Intricate and strangely beautiful etchings and drawings by Briony Morrow-Cribbs capture diabolical bugs of all shapes and sizes in this mixture of history, science, murder, and intrigue that begins—but doesn't end—in your own backyard.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A fascinatingly dark look at the world of wonders that buzzes, burrows and reproduces all around us... Stewart's research is prodigious and her writing precise, whether she's telling the tale of a caterpillar that looks like a tiny Persian cat or more about fleas than you ever wanted to know.

Read this book and you'll always keep your gardening gloves on...Stewart concentrates on scarily diabolical bugs, to great effect. *Seattle Times (Entertainment Weekly)* "If you've got an insect phobia, this probably isn't the book for you. But if not, dig in, as Stewart gleefully archives more than 100 of earth's creepiest crawlies. *Entertainment Weekly (Smithsonian.com)* "There is a ton of well-researched, fascinating information with terrific and terrifying stories from history ... As Stewart writes, *we are seriously outnumbered.* *It's best we know our enemies.* *Smithsonian.com (NPR's "Weekend Edition")* "There are a number of interesting tidbits in this book, you know, things that you might want to work into a conversation. *Linda Wertheimer, NPR's "Weekend Edition"* (NPR's "Fresh Air") "From bat bugs to yes, bat bugs to banana slugs to the pork tapeworm, [Stewart] details the most infectious, most terrifying insects on the planet. *NPR's "Fresh Air"* "I read your book, and I'm all itchy. *Dave Davies, NPR's "Fresh Air"* "A word of warning: Some of the descriptions ahead might trigger your gag reflex. *Terry Gross, NPR's "Fresh Air"* (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel) "Stewart offers witty capsule biographies of dozens of chitin horrors, from the African bat bug to the tsetse fly, with plenty of shout-out for the spiders who haunt our nightmares, including such familiars as black widows and brown recluses. *- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (The New York Times)* "Wicked Bugs defines bug in the amateur sense that is, anything creepy-crawly, including worms, snails, slugs and other insects that are not, technically speaking, bugs. A true bug, Ms. Stewart acknowledges, has six legs and wings, like all insects, as well as piercing and sucking mouthparts. And wicked, she makes clear, lies in the eye of the beholder, whether you're a Roman with scorpions falling into your eyes or a Marylander with stink bugs falling into your hair... Wicked Bugs has some good tips for gardeners, like putting out rolled-up newspaper or cardboard tubes at night to trap earwigs and dumping them into soapy water in the morning... In fact, no bug is truly wicked. It is just eating. *New York Times* (Kirkus Reviews) "[Wicked Bugs] is not a comprehensive field guide but a smorgasbord of facts ranging from horrible, painful or otherwise discomfiting about bugs... Stewart's prose is simple and to the point. She lets the little horrors she describes work in the reader's imagination without any hyperbolic help from her. Guaranteed to cause sympathy itching and other discomfort. *Kirkus Reviews (Washington Post)* "A cavalcade of terrors ...

[Wicked Bugs] makes for an entertaining tour of creepy-crawly

territory. [Washington Post](#) (Scientific American blog) "This book covers many of the gross, frightening, disgusting, and awful things that bugs can do to you. And it's COOL ... Bugs become less gross, and a lot more interesting, when put into the context of how they have changed human history." [Scientific American blog](#) (Knoxville News-Sentinel) "I should have known it would gross me out, in a deliciously creepy kind of way. It's everything you didn't know you didn't want to know about insects" [Knoxville News-Sentinel](#) (The Oregonian) "[Stewart] wrote this book to scare the bugs out of you" [Stewart is not an entomologist, but she is a consummate storyteller with a curious mind.](#) [The Oregonian](#)

Amy Stewart is the award-winning author of six books on the perils and pleasures of the natural world. She is the cofounder of the popular blog Garden Rant and is a contributing editor at Fine Gardening magazine. She and her husband live in Eureka, California, where they own an antiquarian bookstore called Eureka Books.

I got a kick out of Amy Stewart's Introduction, titled: "Warning: We are Seriously Outnumbered". Ain't that the truth. She goes on to write: "It is estimated that there are ten quintillion insects alive on the planet right now, which means that for each one of us, there are two hundred million of them." This book covers only the bug species who are out to get us. They are presented alphabetically, and each is put into one of five categories:.... HORRIBLE. One example in this category is the Screwworm Fly. As Stewart writes, "Any creature with a name like hominivorax is best avoided."....PAINFUL. It's no surprise that the Scorpion is in this section. A hint: "Scorpions glow under ultraviolet light, so Arizonans who wish to check under their beds for scorpions can use a blacklight flashlight."....DEADLY. Everybody has heard of the Tsetse Fly in this category. (Stewart doesn't use a hyphen.) A historical tidbit: "Henry Morton Stanley, the man who found David Livingstone in Africa, left an epidemic of sleeping sickness in his wake that wiped out as much as two-thirds of the region's population."....DANGEROUS. I've always thought of the Cockroach as creepy, not dangerous. But, these bugs shuttle "between people, food, and garbage [meaning] that roaches carry any number of pathogens around with them, including E. coli, salmonella, leprosy, typhoid, dysentery, plague, hookworm, hepatitis, staphylococcus, and streptococcus." Is that enough?....DESTRUCTIVE. Another surprising categorization for me was putting the Nightcrawler under Destructive. Now I know. Earthworms are beneficial. Nightcrawlers

are a larger invasive European species that is destructive to forests. The book's pages are not totally white, and they're shaded as if they are from a well-worn field manual. The copper etching illustrations by Briony Morrow-Cribbs are very nice. Last, but not least, there is an index and an extensive bibliography. "Wicked Bugs" was published in 2011. I rate it 4.3 stars, rounded down to 4. I enjoyed her earlier book even more, published in 2009, "Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities." Recommended reading! Happy Reader

If you think bugs are creepy now, wait till you read this! "Bugs" here is used to describe a broad range of critters, from the microscopic to the large, and from insects and spiders etc. through various kinds of worms. The tags range from "deadly" to "horrible", with stops at "painful", "dangerous", and "destructive". It's a horror show! The writing and the wonderful production values in the book help to ease one through all the revoltingness, though, and make the book both an entertaining and darkly fun read. Each pest, or category of pest, gets its own short essay, complete with lurid details about what's so icky about them. The artwork by Briony Morrow-Cribbs adds much to the enjoyment. Even the most skin-crawly of critters somehow looks better in her wonderful illustrations (and somehow less likely to give one nightmares), especially combined with the excellent layout and the 2-color printing. It's a very elegant book. I got this at least a year ago, after loving 2 of her other books- "Drunken Botanist" and "Wicked Plants". I'd recommend these too. I'd put off reading this one, though, because bugs do make my skin crawl in general. I would not recommend it to the currently phobic! It's a great book on scary, revolting, and creepy topics that are nonetheless a part of life- and it's beautifully done. Recommended- with caution!

Stewart is a great writer and this book is a great look at weird and yucky bugs from all over the world. I felt as though I was in 5th grade again when I read it, alternately delighted and grossed out.

I bought this through Kindle and found myself skipping through a lot of it since I knew a little about certain insects already. Actually, probably even more than I ever wanted to. But this book tells us things about certain caterpillars - those cute, fuzzy, prickly-legged creatures I used to let crawl up my arm - that caused me to think twice about ever picking one up again. And they're just one of several hundred Ms. Stewart writes about. She tells about mating habits of most of the bugs in the book and it seems the males have difficulties mating with those testy female counterparts in most if not all instances. Even without a headache, she can be vicious both during and right after the mating ritual. He usually ends up as an after-sex snack which would be a real let down after saving

himself his entire short life for that one in a million mating opportunity. There are a few where the male leaves, very quickly, after having done his duty. Most if not all the mating rituals though are very violent. I truly hope that it never becomes trendy to off the human male after impregnating his mate. Hopefully those who claim over-population of the planet will never consider it as a means to keep the numbers down. All in all, it is a fascinating book and one that could possibly cause one to become phobic about the tiny creatures that share our space with us. It's also a great place to start research for a science report about bugs and their relevancy in our world.

My choice of this book comes from Ms Stewart's Wicked Plants. Plus the fact that I have an interest in how nature fights back against humans. I found this book to be enjoyable reading for those, who want to get the crap scared out of them by insects. The drawings of the wicked little bugs are fascinating to look at as you read how such small things can cause such major problems for humans and our animals. I would recommend this to those with a strong stomach for some of these bugs are nasty. But don't let that stop you from reading Wicked Bugs. Now I have to go and search for bugs again. Darn good book.

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