

Crayfish



GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST

ECO-SERVICE CARDS

CRAYFISH

FAMILY: Cambaridae

ORDER: Decapoda

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ adults around 3 inches long
- ◆ 10 legs; two front legs are large lobster-like claws called 'chellae'
- ◆ segmented body covered with hard reddish or brown plates
- ◆ 2 - 4 antennae; eyes protrude on moveable stalks
- ◆ two tubercles (tubes) project from the back of the abdomen



Where to Look

Crayfish are found in lakes, ponds, rivers and streams hiding in the mud and under rocks during the day. They come out at night to hunt.

What It Eats.

Crayfish eat both plants and animals (living and dead). including frogs, insects, earthworms, fish, algae, duckweed and cattails.



LIFE CYCLE

First a crayfish starts out as an egg. Then it hatches and looks like a adult but it is smaller. Than it molts to a bigger crayfish. After that it gets to be a adult and if it is a female it will have babies.

Who Eats It?

Crayfish are preyed upon by racoons, opossums, fish, turtles, birds, and snakes.



Did You Know...

Crayfish are very aggressive and will use their large claws to defend their territory. They also have the ability to swim backwards to escape predators.

Role in the Ecosystem

Crayfish play an important role in aquatic ecosystems by cleaning up debris and dead organic matter..