

# Did you know?



Biologists can gauge the health of a stream by taking a census of the aquatic insects that live in it. Because water pennies cannot tolerate pollution, high sedimentation, and high amounts of algae and fungi, their presence or absence in a stream is an indicator of the stream's water quality.

Water pennies go through the same life stages as other beetles, except that the larva is flat and looks like a penny instead of a grub! The larvae may take more than a year to mature. When they are large enough to pupate, they do so either underwater, still attached to stones, or in the soil near the stream. When they emerge as adult beetles, their mission is to locate the opposite sex, mate, and lay eggs; they don't live long as adults.

The larvae eat algae by scraping it off of rocks using rasps on their legs. Depending on species, they may also scavenge from a variety of other materials, including other aquatic invertebrates. We're not sure, but it's possible the short-lived adults might not eat at all.



Adult Water Penny Beetle