



Mayfly Nymphs

Freshwater fish, like trout, love to snack on Mayfly Nymphs. Mayflies belong to the order Ephemeroptera, which means short-lived wings (Ephemeros - one day, and Pteron - wing).

What they look like

Mayfly Nymphs usually have three long tails or cerci (sir-see). Some species have leaf-like side gills along their abdomen. They have a single claw on each leg, short antennae and sometimes, wing pads.

Where they live

Mayfly Nymphs live under stones in fast-flowing water or among plants in slow streams. Some species live in small burrows at the bottom of the stream. Some are flat and cling to the bottom of rocks in fast-flowing streams. They are mostly found in cool, more permanent water bodies like streams and lakes.

What they eat

Most Mayfly Nymphs are either herbivores (herb-ee-vorz), eating only plant matter, or detritivores (det-try-tee-vorz), feeding on decaying material, while some are predators. They generally feed on top of stones and retreat underneath to escape predators. Some species are collectors, filter-feeding on material floating in the water, while others are scrapers, actively scraping plant material from rocks. While adults don't eat at all. Mayfly nymphs are a good food for fish.

Pollution tolerance

 Very sensitive, rating 9

Mayfly Nymphs are sensitive to low levels of oxygen in the water. Some prefer cool water as it holds more oxygen when saturated than warm water, while some mayflies are tropical and live in warmer waters. They are sensitive to chemical pollution in the water, flow rate of the waterway and sunlight (sometimes preferring shady spots).

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Pollution tolerance	Very sensitive	Sensitive	Tolerant	Very tolerant	
Size	Up to 20 mm long				

What's interesting about the Mayfly Nymph?

- Mayfly Nymphs can take from three weeks to two years to become full-grown adults.
- Nymphs of many species vibrate their gills to increase the amount of water moving over them (this is the equivalent of panting). Their gills may also be used as swimming paddles.
- Adult Mayflies have male and female sexes, but in some species the females can lay unfertilised eggs (without male interaction) that hatch into more females. This is called parthenogenesis (path-en-oh-gen-e-siss).

Where they fit in

Phylum Arthropoda > **Class** Insecta > **Order**

Ephemeroptera > **Family** (Nine Australian families): Siphonuridae; Baetidae; Oniscigastridae; Ameletopsidae; Coloburiscidae; Leptophlebiidae; Teloganodidae; Caenidae; Prosopistomatidae

