

Dragonflies & Damselflies

anisoptera & zygoptera



Dragonflies and damselflies belong to a group of flying insects called Odonata. They are among the most colourful and largest insects we will see flying around in Ireland. There are 11 species of damselfly and 13 species of dragonfly resident in Ireland.



Dragonfly or Damselfly?

- Damselflies are smaller than dragonflies with a thin, twig like body. The Dragonflies body is thicker and more sturdy looking.
- Dragonflies have larger eyes than damselflies, with their eyes taking up most of the head and wrapping around to the sides.
- Dragonflies have 2 sets of similar sized wings with their hind wings being broad at the base. Damselflies wings are more slender and taper at the base.



Did you know?

Odonata means 'toothed one' because of their serrated teeth.

They were around 300 million years ago, with fossil dragonflies having 2 foot wingspans!



How do they grow?

The female lays her eggs in water and these develop into nymphs which spend a year or more living in the water developing.

When the time is right, the nymph will crawl out of the water and attach themselves to a plant or other object, their outer casing will split open and an adult will emerge and start to spread their wings.



What do they eat?

Dragonflies eat other insects like flies, midges and mosquitoes, as well as butterflies and even smaller dragonflies! Damselflies eat mosquitoes, flies and other tiny insects.

the different species of dragonfly range from 32mm in length to 78mm



damselfly species vary in length from 26mm to 45mm

The Dragonfly and Damselfly wordsearch

Can you find all the words? The answers go in all directions!



wingspan dragonfly damselfly butterflies
toothed insects odonata serrated mosquito
water flying wings nymph



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