

XPLOR MOR



Flashy FACTS



Fireflies talk to each other with light. A male firefly's twinkling tush is like a neon sign. "Here I am," it blinks. "Do you like me?" Female fireflies hiding in the grass blink back when they spot a male they fancy.

More than 150 kinds of fireflies live in North America. Many species live in the same place, so males and females need a way to pick out their own kind in the dark. That's why each species has a unique blinking pattern. For example, male big dipper fireflies light up for

a solid half second while flying in a J-shaped pattern. Another common firefly blinks on and off every second like a strobe light.

Some female fireflies copy the flash pattern of other females. When a male arrives hoping for love, the female *liar-fly* grabs him and eats him for supper. Sometimes, love hurts.

Firefly Fun 1 • 2 • 3 • flash

Lure a male big dipper firefly right to your fingertips by mimicking the female's flash. When you see a male finish his J-shaped flash, immediately count, "one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three," then flash a small LED light for half a second. Repeat until the male arrives.



WHAT IS IT?

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Speckled kingsnakes, which are also called salt-and-pepper snakes, are named for the yellow speckles on their black scales. Kingsnakes prey mostly on mice, but they also eat lizards and even other snakes. They're immune to pit viper venom, which comes in handy when tangling with rattlesnakes and copperheads. Kingsnakes kill prey by wrapping around an unlucky animal and squeezing until it can't breathe.



F

Crack the Code

Why did the firefly dump her boyfriend? The answer is hidden in this series of blinks. Use the key to crack the code.



Free the Right Fly



My mate's trapped. Can you find him? He looks like this.

Help!



This key

is based on International Morse Code, which uses dots and dashes (short and long sounds or flashes of light) to communicate a message. Here, yellow circles represent dots and black circles represent dashes. Real fireflies don't use such a complex code.

A	●●	N	●●
B	●●●●	O	●●●●
C	●●●●	P	●●●●
D	●●●●	Q	●●●●
E	●	R	●●●
F	●●●●	S	●●●●
G	●●●●	T	●
H	●●●●	U	●●●●
I	●●	V	●●●●
J	●●●●	W	●●●●
K	●●●●	X	●●●●
L	●●●●	Y	●●●●
M	●●	Z	●●●●

Crack the Code: He was not very bright. Free the Right Fly: The upside-down fly at the very bottom of the jar.