

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: Maggie Heumann, UNL

Common Name: European Mantid

Scientific Name: *Mantis religiosa*

Order and Family: Mantodea: Mantidae

Size and Appearance: The European mantid is a large insect that has large wings, an extremely elongated thorax, and raptorial (grasping) front legs, giving them their “praying” appearance. Their heads are triangular and freely swivel around the neck above their extended pronotum. The European mantid can be distinguished from other mantis species by the rounded “bullseye” marking on the inside of their forelegs.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	Up to 25mm	Brown masses with a hardened, protective exterior known as an ootheca
Larva/Nymph	>50mm (depending on instar)	Incomplete metamorphosis, smaller instars that look similar to the adult (with wings becoming fully developed at the adult stage)
Adult	50-65mm	Large elongated body with raptorial (“praying”) front legs; elongated thorax; triangular head; black circle w/ centered white dot on inner front leg
Pupa (if applicable)	n/a	Incomplete Metamorphosis (no pupae)

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing mouthparts on both larva and adult.

Host/s: The European mantid is an introduced species and prefers to live in all life stages in a variety of areas across the country from fields and meadows, to backyards and garden-type habitats.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.): Predator-European mantids are predatory and use their grasping front legs to capture other insects, particularly ones that eat foliage, as both nymphs and adults.

References:

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