

Planariidae

Planarian Flatworm

Native to Maine

Freshwater Ponds, Lakes, Rivers, and Streams

Larval Form

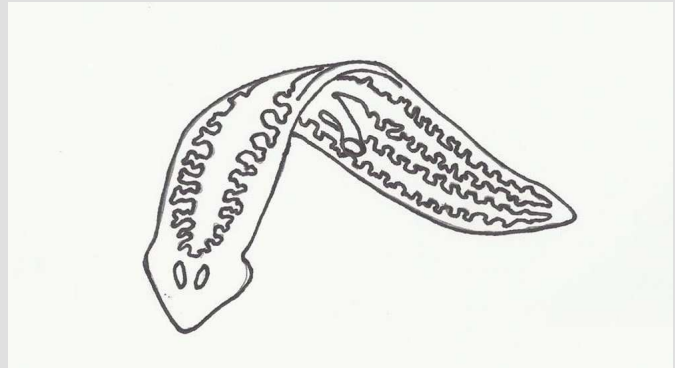


Ado_Out, Picasaweb



Look for long flat worms ranging in length from 1 to 20 mm. Planarian flatworms look like small versions of adults when they hatch from egg cocoons.

Larva Illustration



Sue Donaldson, VS Volunteer



Look for two eye spots and a food tube that can be seen through their translucent (somewhat see-through) bodies. Planaria have cilia (fine hairs) on the edges of their bodies.

Variations and Details

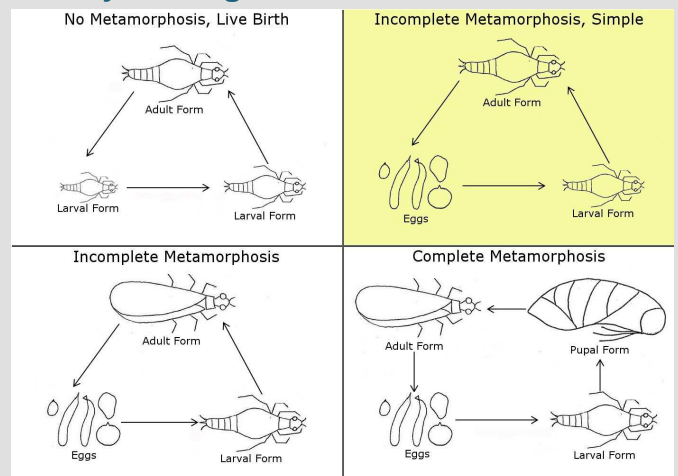


Ado_Out, Picasaweb



Look for a soft, flat, wedge-shaped body that may be black, brown, gray, or white. Body shape can vary from long and narrow to triangular.

Life Cycle Diagram



Adult Form



Alejandro Sánchez Alvarado, Wikimedia



Planaria are not parasites but feed on small living and dead organisms. Their pharynx (mouth tube) is in the center of their body.

Similar Species

Planaria are distinguished from other worms by their two eyespots, which sense light. Planaria generally move away from light sources. Planaria are also wider and flatter than other common worms.

Fun Fact

If split in two, a single Planarian can regrow into two separate flatworms. Planaria are hermaphrodites, having both male and female organs. Any two planaria can produce offspring.

Moderately Tolerant of Pollution



Gulf of Maine
Research Institute



www.vitalsignsme.org

Researched and created by: Sue Donaldson

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