

: Tinkerbella nana

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1 The scientist John S. Noyes discovered a new insect in the forests of Costa Rica. It is probably one of the smallest insects in the world. It is so minute that you can only see it under a microscope. It is one quarter of a millimetre long. It can only be found by sweeping a mesh net across the forest floor.

2 It comes from the family of fairyflies.

Fairyflies all have long, thin, delicate wings edged with long hairs.

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3 John Noyes has named this new fairyfly, Tinkerbella nana – Tinkerbella after the fairy Tinkerbelle in the story of Peter Pan, and nana from the word ‘nanos’, which is Greek for dwarf. He also chose nana because Nana is the name of the dog in the same story.

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4 Tinkerbella nana’s wings flap at over a hundred beats per second.

It eats the eggs and larvae of other insects.

It lays its eggs in concealed places, such as inside a leaf or in soil, and even in other insects’ eggs.

5 Surprisingly, it is a close relative of the wasp. Tinkerbella nana specimens have been added to the Natural History Museum collection of about 1.5 million other wasps.