

POPULAR NAMES OF GYRINIDÆ

In 1926 (Entomological News, 37: 269), the writer listed five vernacular names for these water beetles. More than thrice that number can now be cited and it seems desirable to assemble them in print as a possible stimulus to some historically inclined entomologist to undertake the collection of folk names of insects. As one who has collected bird names for a generation, the writer can recommend this as an interesting and rewarding field.

Per Kalm, whose broad sympathies led him to record the first observations along varied lines of American natural history, in his journal entry for April 13, 1749, noted "vattenbaggen (*Dytiscus natator*).". The translators have made free with this term, which means only "water-beetle." Thus a French interpreter rendered it "tourniquet" (a turning thing), a Dutch one as "zweemer" (swimmer), and an Englishman as "whirl beetle."

John D. Godman, author of "Rambles of a Naturalist," whose wanderings were in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, said in 1830 (Waldie's Library, 2: 85) that they are "called by the boys the water-witches and apple smellers," and that they have "a delightful smell exactly similar to that of the richest, mellowest apple." Confirmation of the existence of this pleasant aroma occurs in the oft-quoted "Swallow Barn" (John P. Kennedy, 1832, 1: 129), where we read, "The apple-bugs (as schoolboys call that glossy black insect which frequents the summer pools, and is distinguished for the perfume of the apple) danced in myriads over the surface of the still water." Mellow-bugs and sugar-bugs are names of the same origin.

The dancing alluded to, familiar to all entomologists as well as to many of the general public, a swift darting in intersecting curves, each leaving a momentary wake upon the water, accounts for two of the Kalm-associated names, for the water-witch of Godman, and also for such terms as scuttle bugs, whirligigs, and whirligig beetles. Of quite different origin must be the names penny bugs, dollar bugs, and lucky bugs; the first two of these may have been suggested by the ovate shape, or all of these terms may have an allied and obscure significance. In the writer's ex-

perience, a lucky bug in the United States is one that brings luck in love. Professor H. E. Jaques informs me that at McGregor, Iowa, "The kids around the river were told that if they would catch one (some trick to that of course) and put it under their pillow when they went to bed, the next morning there would be a *scent* there."

Names of Gyrinidæ recorded for England, some of which evidently were imported to the United States, are: steelcoat, water-flea, whirligig, whirligig beetle, and whirlwig.

Following is a check-list of the names with indications of the states where they are known to have been used*:

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| Apple bug, N. J., Md., Va., Ind. | Scuttle bug, N. J. Sugar bug, Md. |
| Apple smeller, N. J., Pa., Minn. | Tourniquet (French). Water-flea, N. Y. |
| Dollar bug, Mass. | Water-witch, N. J., Pa. |
| Eel bug, N. C. | Whirl beetle. |
| Lackey bug (may be a variant of lucky bug), Mass. | Whirligig, N. Y. |
| Lucky bug, Mass. | Whirligig beetle, N. Y. |
| Mellow bug, Ala. | Zweemer (Dutch). |
| Penny bug, Iowa. | |

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