



Larger-than-life Bug Lab Exhibition Makes U.S. Debut at Discovery Place Science

From the creative minds known for their work on “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy, giant insects descend upon Charlotte beginning Dec. 8

CHARLOTTE - Some of the world’s smallest creatures are about to have a big impact at Discovery Place Science in Charlotte. The Museum’s newest traveling exhibition, [Bug Lab](#), opens Dec. 8 and will offer visitors a close-up, larger-than-life look at the world’s smallest geniuses.

For the first time in North America, giant bug models will serve as tour guides while Museum-goers learn, through a variety of hands-on activities and experiences, how different types of insects live and what kind of impact they have on human innovation.

“Bugs really are high-powered packets of ingenuity. We humans are increasingly adapting their talents to solve the world’s most complex problems,” said Catherine Wilson Horne, president and CEO, Discovery Place. “*Bug Lab* takes us on a colorful journey into the bugs’ world to understand and appreciate their tremendous contributions to human lives.”

The exhibition was created by New Zealand’s world-famous museum Te Papa, working with five-time Academy Award-winning design and manufacture studio Weta Workshop, the studio behind the design and physical effects for “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy. The exhibition elements took more than 40,000 hours to create before premiering in New Zealand at Te Papa. After touring Australasia, the exhibition will now make its U.S. debut in Charlotte.

“For 450 million years, bugs have been getting smarter. From brain surgery to teamwork to the power of flight – they really can do it all. Now they’re sharing their genius to help humans make the world a better place,” says exhibition co-creator and Weta Workshop CEO and co-founder, Sir Richard Taylor.

Featuring massive three-dimensional, detailed insect models, *Bug Lab* provides opportunities for adults and children alike to uncover bugs’ talents and strengths in a show-stopping setting. Visitors will journey through four distinct chambers and have the chance to:

- Meet an Orchid Mantis, who hunts her prey disguised as the most beautiful flower of all;
- Discover how the Jewel Wasp is a killer brain surgeon, turning its victims into zombies;
- Witness the incredible flight of the Dragonfly in the zoetrope, a spectacular 3D animation unlike anything on the planet; and
- Join with other visitors in Bees vs Hornets: you become the bees defending your hive from the deadly hornet.



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Dozens of additional interactive experiences offer visitors the chance to test their reflexes, practice bug brain surgery, slide through the Bombardier Beetle or fly their origami butterfly in the *Bug Lab* wind tunnel.

“This is a next-level experience with a huge wow factor for visitors,” said Ben Barraud, Te Papa’s Head of Design for the exhibition. “The exhibition is packed with fascinating science content, looking at how humans are adapting bug technology: from drones inspired by the humble housefly, to spider venom being used to treat cancer.”

To deepen the educational experience, Discovery Place Science will offer a full schedule of events and activities in which visitors can explore amazing adaptations, mysterious metamorphosis and lots of legs. Details of each can be found at discoveryplacescience.org. Highlights include:

Club Bug: An opening day insect extravaganza with a bug-themed music club, live bugs, DIY bug antennas, a bug parade and more. Visitors can craft an Air Bee ‘n Bug winter hotel for pollinators and collect special edition bug cards while moving through the Museum. *December 8.*

Winter Wonder Bugs: Bug out when school’s out! During the season of celebrations, Discovery Place Science will be celebrating bugs with hands-on activities, a Bug Bistro to get the flavor of bugs, bug-inspired ornament-making and a Bug Bar where local experts will answer questions. *December 20 – January 2.*

Arthropod Day: It’s the big bug bonanza, featuring expert entomologists from around the region. Plus, guests can place their bets -- for bragging rights only -- on cockroach and caterpillar races, get close to live bugs, and the bravest of all may compete in the bug-eating competition. *April 27.*

Bug Bar: Engage with visiting scientists and learn about all the creepy crawly invertebrates that make living small look big. Each month, a scientist or educator will be on hand to talk about a different species and to answer questions about the diverse array of invertebrates that live in the Carolinas. *Second Saturday of every month.*

Discovery Place Science visitors also will be able to get up-close with live bugs each day in the *Explore More Life* lab or during daily shows. Throughout the exhibition, special activities and demonstrations will be featured daily including the Bug Bistro (get a taste of micro-livestock), Robo Roaches (control cockroaches using circuits), an armored bug build (craft an exoskeleton), butterfly masks (make a craft to take home), ladybug lab (learn about the cutest bug) and more. Activities will be featured on the daily schedule at discoveryplacescience.org or on digital screens in the Museum.



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Guests can further immerse themselves in the wild with a trip into [Backyard Wilderness](#) in the IMAX® Dome Theatre. The film reveals the unexpected delights of nature that are in our own neighborhoods and communities. Spanning a seasonal year around a suburban home, the film displays a stunning array of unique wildlife and animal behavior all captured by cameras mounted inside dens and nests and moving along forest floors and pond bottoms. The secrets of nature are then revealed in rare and breathtaking detail.

Bug Lab will be on exhibition from Dec. 8, 2018 through May 5, 2019. Ticket prices and packages to *Bug Lab* are:

	Adults	Children (2-13)	Seniors (60+)	Members	Welcome
<i>Bug Lab</i> (includes full-day Museum admission)	\$20	\$16	\$18	\$3	\$4
Beetle Bundle (<i>Bug Lab</i> PLUS <i>Backyard Wilderness</i> , includes full-day Museum admission)	\$24	\$20	\$22	\$7	\$8

Discounts are available for schools and groups of 15 or more. Tickets are on sale now and advance sales are highly recommended. Reserve your spot in advance at science.discoveryplace.org, via phone at 704.372.6261 or in person at Admissions. For more information, visit discoveryplacescience.org.

Media Notes

Download high-resolution images [here](#). Photo credit: “Copyright Te Papa”

Requests for interviews or special access to the exhibition can be accommodated by request. Contact Kristen Swing at KristenS@discoveryplace.org.

About Discovery Place Science

One of the top hands-on science museums in the nation, Discovery Place Science provides ever-changing, entertaining facilities that engage people in the active exploration of science, technology and nature. The museum brings relevant, contemporary science to life through groundbreaking exhibitions, interactive educational programming and hands-on activities. Discovery Place Science is located in Uptown Charlotte at 301 N. Tryon St. Convenient parking is available in the Museum’s parking deck—the Carol Grotnes Belk Complex—at the corner of Sixth and Church streets. For more information about Discovery Place Science, call 704-372-6261, visit discoveryplace.org, or connect with Discovery Place



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Science on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Discovery Place is a 501c3 nonprofit that provides STEM education to the Carolinas through four distinct museum experiences at Discovery Place Science, Discovery Place Nature and Discovery Place Kids, interactive educational programming, professional development training and community outreach initiatives. Discovery Place is supported, in part, with funding from the Arts & Science Council.

About Te Papa

Te Papa is the national museum of New Zealand, combining science, art, history and the culture of New Zealand's indigenous Māori people. Since opening in 1998, it has been recognised as a world-leader in innovative museum experiences, attracting over 1.5 million visitors a year, in a country of only four million people. Te Papa's previous co-creation with Weta Workshop, *Gallipoli: The scale of our war* has smashed records for exhibition attendance, and its touring exhibition Whales | Tohora has attracted more than three million visitors at venues throughout the United States. See more at www.tepapa.govt.nz

About Weta Workshop

For over 20 years, five-time Academy Award®-winning Weta Workshop has applied creativity and craftsmanship to blockbuster films and hit television series including *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies, *King Kong*, *Avatar*, *District 9*, *Thunderbirds Are Go* and *Ghost in the Shell*. This diverse, innovative company is also a tourist destination, producer of consumer products, interactive studio in collaboration with Magic Leap, behind-the-scenes facility, and creator of public sculptures and exhibitions, including Te Papa's record-breaking *Gallipoli: The scale of our war*. CEO Richard Taylor is involved in all projects, from concept to completion. See more at www.wetaworkshop.com

**Absolutely
Positively
Wellington**
Me Heke Ki Poneke

This exhibition has been
developed by the Museum
of New Zealand Te Papa
Tongarewa with Weta
Workshop Limited



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