

# A charismatic new lacewing from Malaysia discovered online by chance

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This shows the habitat of *Semachrysa jade* sp. n., rainforest, Selangor State Park, Selangor, Malaysia. Credit: Guek Hock Ping

[Green lacewings](#) are delicate green insects with large, lace-like wings that live in a wide variety of habitats, especially tropical forests. Adults mostly feed on flowers, but the larvae are ferocious predators of other insects, frequently carrying the dead carcasses of their prey on their backs after killing them using their enormous, sucking tube-like jaws.

In this study, a beautiful new species of green lacewing in the genus *Semachrysa* is described from the Malaysian rainforest. The wing pattern

is its most distinctive feature. Yet, this discovery could have been missed by scientists, as the only documented evidence that the new species existed was an exquisite series of images posted online in Flickr after the insect was released.



Adult green lacewing (*Semachrysa jade* sp. n.) Credit: Guek Hock Ping

Only after scientists came across the images online by chance, efforts were made to capture more specimens so that this species could be formally described as new to science. Without an actual specimen to place in a museum as a reference, a formal description is not possible. One year later another, individual was collected at the same locality and the scientists and professional photographer joined forces to collaborate on the description of this new species, which was published in the [open access](#) journal *ZooKeys*.



This is an adult green lacewing (*Semachrysa jade* sp. n.). Credit: Guek Hock Ping

**More information:** Winterton SL, Guek HP, Brooks SJ (2012) A charismatic new species of green lacewing discovered in Malaysia (Neuroptera, Chrysopidae): the confluence of citizen scientist, online image database and cybertaxonomy. *ZooKeys* 214: 1. [doi: 10.3897/zookeys.214.3220](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.214.3220)

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