

Natural Enemy Guide

Beneficial insects can be a big help in fending off unwanted pests, such as aphids, slugs and mealybugs, in gardens and landscapes. These natural predators can prey on the pests devouring your garden and are a long-lasting, natural, non-toxic solution that will further the ecological diversity of your yard.

Why beneficial insects are more effective than pesticides:

- With increased use of pesticides, many bugs have developed pesticide resistance. Beneficial insects eat the pests, so you can deal with pest problems effectively without the use of toxic pesticides.
- Pesticides can't decipher between "good bugs" and "bad bugs" and they'll kill not only your predators, but also beneficial insects, soil microbes, bees, butterflies and other important species essential to functional ecosystems. Beneficial insects provide long-term control and will only go after your unwanted predators.
- Beneficial insects are cost-effective and safe for humans and the environment. Pesticides are not.

Top natural enemies

Lady beetles



Description: Tiny, round, and orange, and black spotted. Both larvae and adults are predators.

Feeds on: Aphids, thrips, mealybugs, mites and soft-bodied insects, nectar and aphid honeydew.

Lacewigs



Description: Pale green or brown veined wings.

Feeds on: Sometimes called the "aphid lion" because they specialize in devouring aphids and soft-bodied insect pests such as

mealybugs, spider mites, thrips and small caterpillars. Also feed on pollen, nectar and honeydew.

Syrphid flies



Description: Adults look like small bees with striped abdomens and have two wings.

Feeds on: Adults feed on pollen and nectar and larvae feed on aphids, small caterpillars and mealybugs.

Big-eyed bugs



Description: Large, bulging eyes with small, flat and oval bodies.

Feeds on: Mites, aphids, and insect eggs.

Soldier bug



Description: Brown to yellow with black spots and prominent spine on each shoulder.

Feeds on: Grubs, caterpillars, corn borers, corn earworms, cabbage loopers, cabbage worms, flea beetles, and soft bodied insects.

Ground beetles



Description: Large, long legs, dark blue or black bodies with a metallic sheen.

Feeds on: Slugs, root maggots, cutworms and other ground pests.

Spiders



Description: Many varieties, but have eight legs with a circular abdomen.

Feeds on: Feed on all insects and small arthropods; especially helpful in controlling beetles, caterpillars, leafhoppers and aphids.

Hunting wasps



Description: Slender, elongated bodies that are dull black in color with grey wings.

Feeds on: Attack eggs of pests and feed on pollen and nectar.

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Tachinid flies



Description: Very similar to house flies, but have coarse bristles covering their abdomen. Are usually black, grayish or brown, but some are brightly colored.

Feeds on: Cutworms, armyworms, Japanese beetles, tent caterpillars, cabbage loopers, gypsy

moths, sawflies, squash bugs and sowbugs.

Pirate bug



Description: Very small, teardrop shaped with black bodies and white marking on lower back.

Feeds on: Aphids, spider mites, insect eggs, caterpillars, and thrips.

Assassin bugs



Description: Generally black or dark brown with long slender antennae, and head tapered behind their eyes to give appearance of a long neck. Have sucking mouthparts.

Feeds on: Feed on everything from beetles to caterpillars.

Mantids



Description: Large, tall, slow-moving insects with triangular heads. Camouflage into environment and may mimic sticks, leaves, bark or flowers.

Feeds on: General predators that feed on any insect and don't discriminate "good" from "bad" insects.

Predatory stink bugs



Description: Light brown or black with yellow or red markings with shield shaped bodies. Produce strong odor when disturbed.

Feeds on: Feeds generally, but can keep pests in check such as caterpillars, sawfly larvae and grubs.

Beneficial nematodes



Description: Microscopic roundworms that occur naturally in soil.

Feeds on: Caterpillars, cutworms, fleas, termites, fungus

gnats, leafminers, ticks, thrips and do not prey on most beneficial insects.

Damsel bug



Description: Dull brown with thick front legs.

Feeds on: Aphids, caterpillars, thrips, leafhoppers, and other soft-bodied insects.

Fun fact:

Over 97 percent of those usually seen in our home landscapes are either beneficial or "innocent bystanders."