

Wanted: Alive

BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Lady Beetle

AKA: *Lady Bug*

Wanted For:

Eating aphids, mealy bugs, spider mites and more.



Dragonfly

Wanted For:

Eating vast quantities of mosquitoes



Garden Spider

Wanted for:

Eating anything caught in its web.



Paper Wasp

Wanted For:

Lethal injection of caterpillars



Praying Mantis

Wanted For:

Eating anything



Ground beetle

Wanted for:

Eating insects that crawl at night.



Syrphid Flies

Wanted For:

Their Children

AKA: *Flower Flies*

These juveniles feed on aphids, young termites, ants, and bees.



Predatory Bugs

AKA: *Assassin Bug*

Wanted for:

Lethal injection of caterpillars and other insects as seen below.



Green Lacewings

Wanted for:

Their children AKA: *Aphid lions*, eat insect eggs, small caterpillars, spider mites and more.



If FOUND: don't scream, don't call for the pesticides, just relax and enjoy your REWARD: a healthy garden.

Lady Beetle: AKA: **Lady bugs**, love to devour aphids, but will also eat mealy bugs, spider mites, larvae of elm-leaf beetle and many other soft bodied insects and their eggs. Lady beetle larvae will also feed just as vigorously on the same diet as their parents.



Lady bug larvae

Dragonfly: These insects depend entirely on other insects for their food supply. Their favorite meal is mosquitoes and flies.

Spider: Spiders aren't picky eaters. They will eat any insect that gets caught in its web.

Paper wasps: There are many kinds of wasps. Some are small, hard to see and parasitic. Others are big, like red wasps and hornets, and like to inject their eggs into caterpillars. Mud daubers love spiders and feed them to their young.



Hornworm with wasp pupae

Praying Mantis: These insects wait for their prey, which is predominately other insects. The praying mantis isn't discriminatory. Any insect or spider will do including other praying mantises.

Ground Beetles: They hide during the day and prey at night on all kinds of insects. They come in all kinds of colors, shapes, and sizes. They like caterpillars, snails, slugs and other root-eating insects.

Syrphid flies: AKA: **Flower flies** or **Hover flies**, these can be brightly colored and can look like small yellow jacket wasps. Since they are flies, they won't sting. The larvae are voracious feeders of aphids, young termites, ants and bees.



Syrphid larvae

Predatory Bugs: AKA: **Assassin bug**. These insects are aggressive predators. Predatory bugs include **assassin bugs**, **damsel bugs**, **big eyed bugs**, and the **minute pirate bug**. They eat caterpillars, spider mites, aphids, thrips, and leafhoppers. Adults are winged; nymphs (juveniles) are not, but look very much like the adults otherwise. Try not to pick these bugs up. They can give a hurtful bite which can easily become infected.

Green lacewing: Their larvae are also known as **aphid lions**. It's the green lacewings children, or larvae, that eat the lions share of aphids, leafhoppers, spider mites, thrips, moth eggs, and other soft bodied insects. The adults require nectar and pollen to live. If not available, they will leave for better gardens.



Green lacewing larvae or Aphid lion

These are just a very few of the beneficial creatures which can inhabit your garden. The vast majority of insects are either good or harmless to your plants. Only a very few are actually considered bad. Pesticides not only kill the 'bad' insects but also kill the good. To learn more about gardening with beneficial insects and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) see the following: <http://insects.tamu.edu/> or <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/downloads/beneficial.pdf>

To learn more about Texas Master Naturalist Contact: Coastal Prairie Chapter
Ft. Bend/Waller counties
Website: www.coastalprairie.org
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Photos courtesy of Don Johnson, except for Lady beetles, syrphid fly, syrphid fly larvae and green lace wing larvae. These are from the Entomology Department of Texas A & M University. Exceptions also include Green lacewing by Ronald Smith, Auburn Univ., www.ipmimages.org and ground beetle by A. Steven Munson, USDA Forest Service.

