

Ladybugs: Counting the Spots!

There are over 5,000 different species of ladybugs in the world! Also known as lady beetles or ladybird beetles, they come in many different colors and patterns; some red, orange, white, or black, and others with no spots to 20 spots. Ladybugs are very important to the environment as they are predators of some insects like aphids that can hurt plants.



Convergent lady beetle

In the Midwest, the most common ladybugs are the twelve spotted lady beetle, the convergent lady beetle, the seven spotted lady beetle, and the two spotted lady beetle. These ladybugs will eat aphids, spider mites, and mealy bugs. They are highly

beneficial bugs and harmless. Most of these native red and black spotted ladybugs are about the size of a pencil eraser. Their bright colors are a warning sign to potential predators, like birds, saying "I don't taste good!" Sometimes, if they feel very threatened, they will secrete an oily, foul-tasting fluid from joints in their legs.

In the spring, ladybugs will lay 10-70 yellow-orange, oval-shaped eggs (depending on the species) that are stuck to the bottom-side of leaves. The larvae that hatch from eggs, appear nothing like the adults.

In fact larvae look more like miniature blue-black alligators! Once they hatch, larvae go straight to eating; one larvae can consume 400 aphids during the three week period before going through metamorphosis and turning into an adult!



Two spotted lady beetle

In the fall, the ladybugs will find places to hibernate for the cold winter season, nesting under dead leaves and inside hollow logs.



Seven spotted lady beetle



Twelve spotted lady beetle



Ladybug larvae

Asian Lady Beetles: the Invaders!

Multicolored Asian lady beetles are an aggressive, non-native lady beetle. Originally introduced to the United States as a biological

control agent to combat aphids in agricultural and landscape environments, it has become a nuisance but to us and native lady beetles. The Asian lady beetle will invade your homes in the autumn, can bite, and will leave behind a foul-smelling yellowish secretion that can stain walls and furniture.



Some people may have an allergic reaction to this liquid.

Asian lady beetles are typically more orangish but can be red in color. The one distinctive marking is on the black section just behind the bug's head where you'll notice a white "M"-shaped marking.



Asian lady beetle color variation

These beetles will gather in large groups in warm, reflective surfaces like windows, roof shingles, attics, doors, and window frames.



Lucky Lady Beetles!



In nearly all cultures around the world, believe that ladybugs are lucky and that killing one will bring sadness and misfortune. There are many stories and folklore that follow this believe...Good Luck!

If a ladybug is held in the hand while making a wish, the direction that it flies away to shows where your luck will come from!

If a ladybug lands on your hand and flies away unassisted, you will receive good luck.

If you find a ladybug hibernating in the house, you will have good luck.

If the spots on the wings of a ladybug are more than seven, it's a sign of coming famine. If less than seven, it means you will have a good harvest.

Folklore suggests if you catch a ladybug in your home, count the number of spots and that's how many dollars you'll soon find!