

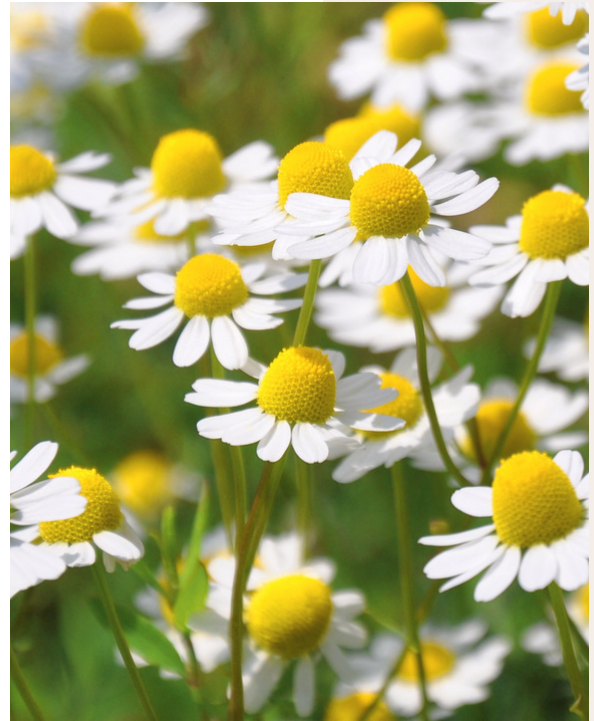
# Attract Beneficial Insects to Your Garden



# Introduction

Welcome to Attracting Beneficial Insects to Your Vegetable Garden.

No garden is immune from pests, but creating an environment where beneficial insects can thrive will greatly reduce many of the "bad bugs" in the garden. Instead of using sprays and dusts, (even organic ones) that can't tell the difference between the good bugs and the bad bugs, add plants that attract beneficial insects. They will help manage the pests in your garden.



In this book I'll introduce you to some of the most common beneficial insects, the pests they help fight, and the plants that will help you create a garden to attract them.

*Karen*

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The ladybug is probably the most common insect we think of when we think of beneficial insects. Did you know that ladybugs can eat 5,000 aphids in their lifetime?

If you saw this mean looking creature in your garden, you might be tempted to "squish" it, but wait! This is the ladybug's larvae. And like the ladybug it will grow up to be, it also eats a variety of pests in your garden.

Lady bugs like to feed on:

- Aphids
- Spider Mites
- White flies
- Leaf hoppers
- Mealy bugs
- Scaly bugs and more.

They also like nectar, so planting flowers that will provide this additional food source will help attract ladybugs to your garden. I saw several ladybugs on the white blossoms of my sugar snap peas.

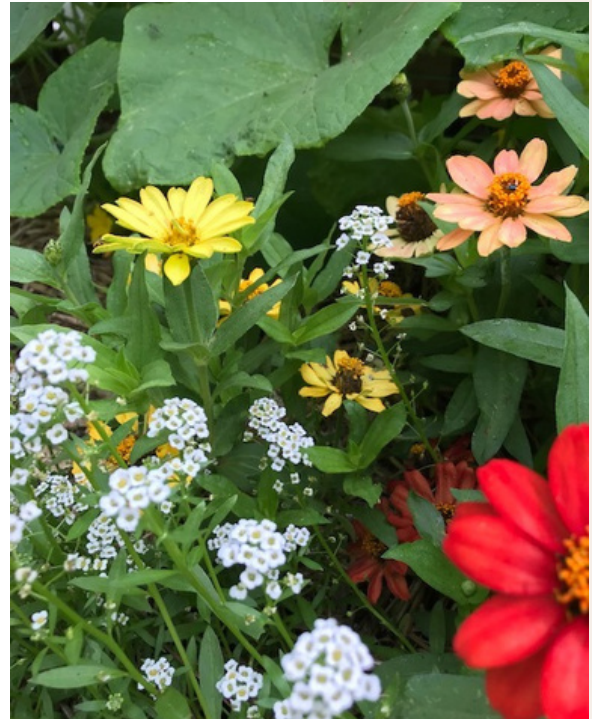


Sweet alyssum attracts beneficial insects such as the ladybug. I planted this pretty white flower from seed in my garden this spring. The zinnias will provide nectar for the pollinators.

Other plants to attract ladybugs include:

- Calendula
- Marigold
- Chives
- Yarrow
- Cosmos
- Dill

Plant nasturtium as a trap crop that will attract aphids for the ladybug to feast on.





There are many different species of parasitic wasp. These tiny wasps are non-stinging and range in size from 1/32" to 1/2". A few are larger.

This little wasp will help you in your battle against aphids, cabbage worms, cucumber beetles, leaf miners, bean beetles, squash vine borers, tomato hornworms, whiteflies and many more pests.



Plant both nectar and pollen plants in your garden to attract these garden helpers.

There are many plants you can choose from but consider a variety of plants including:

- Borage
- Black-eyed Susan
- Chamomile
- Cilantro,
- Coreopsis
- Cosmos
- Yarrow
- Yellow Coneflower
- Sweet alyssum



The thing I find most interesting about this little fly is that all the species use various insects as a host to their eggs. Most use caterpillars such as tomato hornworms, cabbage loopers and others. When their eggs hatch, the larvae will burrow into it and feed on the inside tissue of the caterpillar. Eventually the caterpillar will be killed when the pupate emerges.

If you see a caterpillar with little white eggs attached to it. Leave it. It is providing a home for these beneficial flies.

There is over 1000 species, and most look like the common housefly but smaller.



Tachinid flies not only provide pest control, but act as pollinators in the garden.

They need sources of both nectar and pollen.

Plant a variety of these plants in your garden.

- Oregano (allow to flower)
- Black eyed Susan
- Chamomile
- Daisies
- Sweet Alyssum
- Yellow Coneflowers
- Dill
- Calamint
- Cosmos
- Cilantro
- Dill

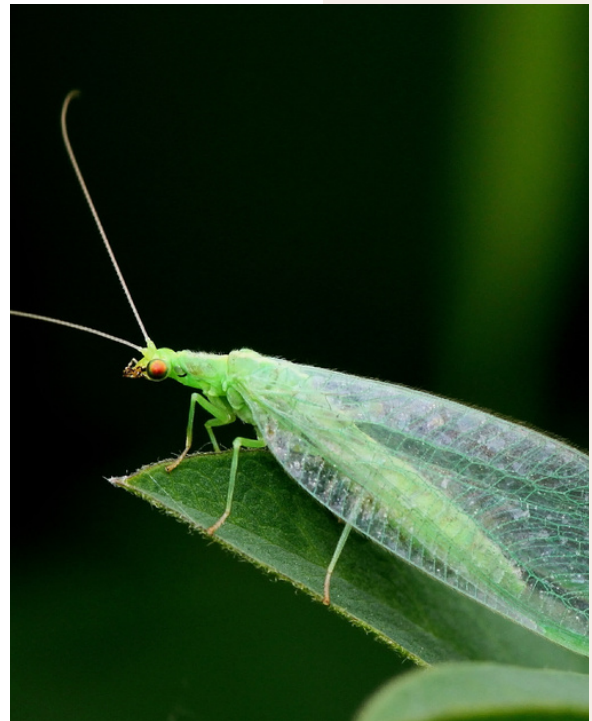




This pretty little green insect  
has lace like wings. But don't let  
it's delicate appearance fool you.  
It can help patrol your garden like  
a lion.

It's favorite meal includes:

- Mealy bugs
- Caterpillars and their eggs
- Aphids
- White flies
- Spider Mites



Plant these in your garden to attract green lacewings.

- Dill (shown in picture)
- Coreopsis
- Cosmos
- Daisies
- Oregano
- Sunflower
- Sweet Alyssum
- Verbena
- Yarrow
- Yellow Coneflower



Beetles overwinter in the ground as adults. They will emerge in the early spring so when you are planning what you want to include in your garden to attract them, be sure to include some early blooming flowers and flowering herbs. Spring bulbs such as snow drops or grape hyacinths are early flowers.

Plants and herbs that attract pirate bugs include:

- Asters
- Calendula
- Coreopsis
- Crimson Clover
- Daisies
- Goldenrod
- Marigolds
- Oregano
- Verbena
- Yarrow
- Yellow Coneflowers



These bugs are so tiny, you may miss their presence in your garden. Their size is around 0.08-0.20 inches! They are one of the most common predators in the garden and will consume pests much larger than themselves. Notice that long needle-like extension from their nose? They use it to pierce their pray and "remove" the internal fluid from them. Some pest on their menu include:

- Spider mites
- Eggs of many insects
- White flies
- Thrips
- Aphids
- Small caterpillars





Soldier Beetles look like fireflies without the light. They are not only beneficial insects whose larvae feed on pests, but as adults, they are great pollinators.

They feed on:

- A variety of eggs and insect larvae
- Grasshoppers
- Aphids
- Cucumber Beetles



Soldier Beetles are attracted to:

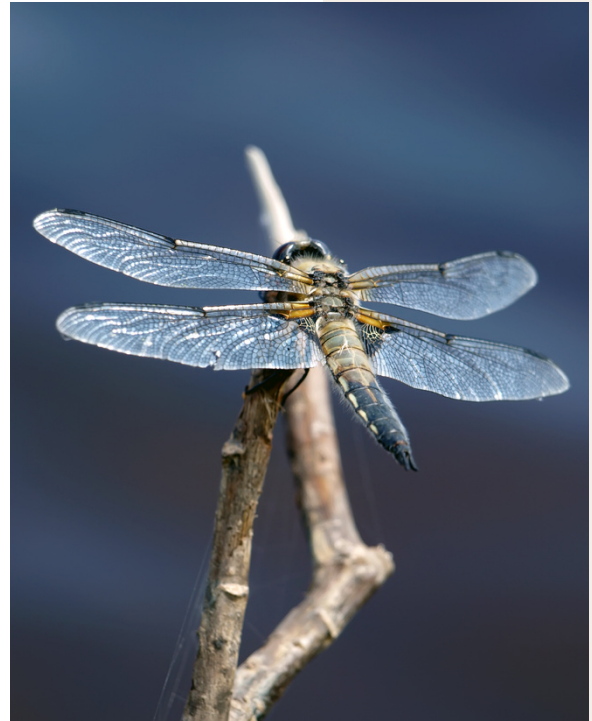
- Sunflowers
- Black eyed Susan
- Flowering herbs such as chamomile, catnip and oregano
- Daisies
- Asters
- Zinnias
- Marigolds



There are many other beneficial insects that I haven't covered here. In the resource section I have included my favorite books that go much more in depth.

Other insects to "leave alone and let them do their work" include

- Spiders eat many insects and pose no harm in the garden.
- Praying Mantis will eat whatever they can catch. Leave some plant stalks in the garden over winter to provide protection for their egg cases.
- Dragonflies eat many insects including mosquitoes and beetles. Found near ponds, you can plant a variety of plants for habitat and to attract their prey. When you see a dragonfly in the garden, it is a symbolic of your dreams coming true.



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Karen"*







# Next Step

Use the spaces below to record your answers.

Creating a haven for beneficial insects can take many forms. Containers, interplanting, or borders of plants. What spaces do you have available?

Print out the garden design worksheet and locate places in your yard or garden where you can provide both nectar and pollen plants

Make a list of the plants or seeds you want to use to create your garden. Strive for a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year.

# Create a Beneficial Insect Garden



When planning your beneficial insect garden, keep these tips in mind:

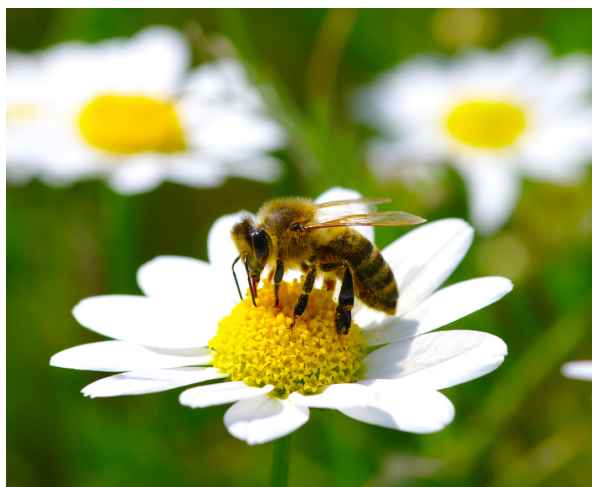
Insects like a wide variety of plants. Instead of just planting one variety, include multiple varieties in your garden.

In my raised bed garden I have planted sweet alyssum as a border inside the bed, along with zinnias in one corner. The sweet alyssum was planted as seed in early spring, then zinnia from transplants in May. Alyssum will attract beneficial insects, and the zinnias will provide pollen and attract bees and other pollinators. Cosmos are ready to bloom, and flowering borage is planted with the tomatoes.

If you plant an inground garden you can provide a row of multiple plants as a border around your garden or interplant with your vegetables.

Containers of plants can be located near your garden. I have an old chicken feed hopper that is filled with purple flowering catmint that sits in the center of my 4 raised beds.

Use the garden design page to draw out a small beneficial garden design. Measure the space. Choose which plants are attractive to you, and beneficial insects. List those you want, then research when they bloom and their height. Taller plants at the back, medium in the middle and smaller in the front. Write down their mature heights, and any other planting directions such as how far apart to space and sun requirements. Include both perennials and annuals. Take your list to the nursery with you so that you will have your plan in front of you.

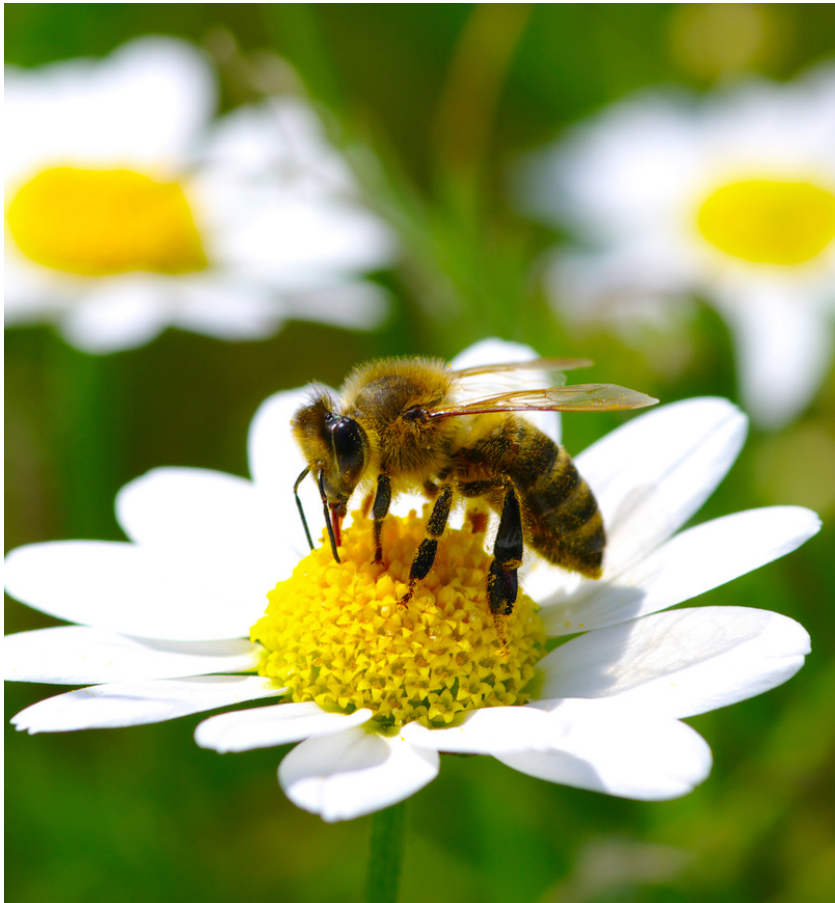


# Resources:

## Books:

- Attracting Beneficial Bugs to Your Garden by Jessica Walliser  
<https://amzn.to/3xMW4tK>
- Good Bugs, Bad Bugs by Jessica Walliser  
<https://amzn.to/3mQ0ZU9>

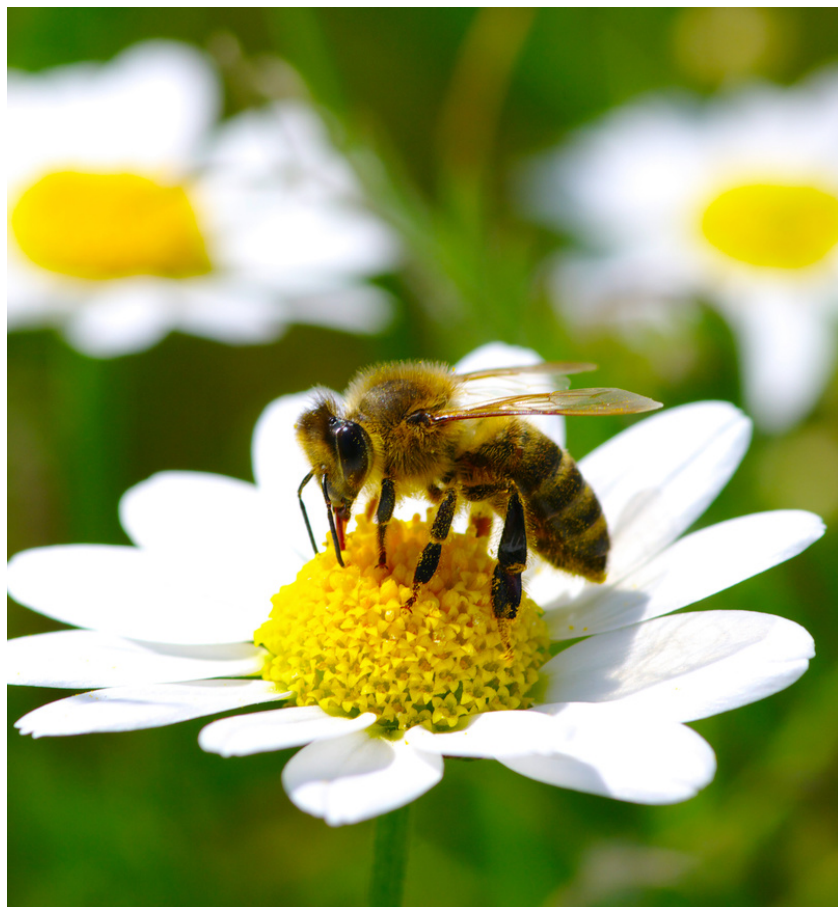
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