

# What's Bugging You?

Resist the urge to kill every bug that appears in your garden! Most insects are, in fact, beneficial.

## Welcome! Bugs & Creatures

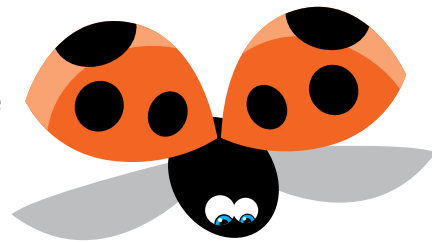
**Ladybugs** – Don't let those black-on-red polka dots fool you! Not only are they cute to look at, but they are hungry critters that love a good feed on aphids and other insects. Ladybugs perform a valuable service in the garden.

**Sowbugs** – At home in a compost bin, they help break down organic matter.

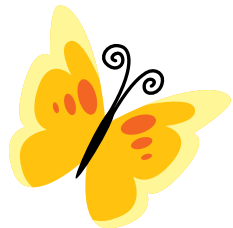
**Spiders** – They control other pests in your garden, and are food for the birds. Spiders are hugely beneficial because they catch numerous other insects in their web.

**Dragonflies** – Beautiful, beneficial predators, they feed on many insects, especially pests such as mosquitoes. They can often be found near ponds or slow streams, and woodlands. If you don't live near a wetland you can consider building a dragonfly pond.

**Butterflies** – Butterflies are magnificent. To attract them to your garden, plant nectar-producing flowers and bushes. Butterflies like colourful flowers and sunlight. Butterfly-friendly gardens also need a shallow watering hole for the butterflies to drink from.



## Go Away! Bugs & Creatures



**Aphids** – Aphids love to suck the juices from your plants.

**Slugs and Snails** – They usually show up at night for to feast on leaves and plants. Pick them up each morning and drop them into your compost bin.

**Caterpillars** – Caterpillars eat your plant's leaves. Gently pick them off your twigs and branches and place them in the grass away from your garden.

**Weevils** – Weevils are white grub-like larvae that can be found in the ground, and have an intense fondness for roots as a food source. Prune off the infested area, bag and dispose of it. Also provide plenty of habitat for natural predators such as wasps and flies.

**Red Spider Mites** – Itty-bitty in size, the colour description gives them away. They are usually found munching on the underside of leaves.

## What do I do to make the uninvited go away?



- Mix liquid soap detergent (choose a natural, phosphate free version) with water (about 2 tablespoons of soap for every gallon of water) and spray it on plants. The soap acts as a deterrent or creates critter discomfort, helping to deter insect visits. This soapy spray is especially effective for dealing with an aphid infestation.
- Spread diatomaceous (pronounced: dye-a-toe-may-shus) earth around your plants. A very fine, white powder, diatomaceous earth is made up of the very small, fossilized remains of ancient sea critters. It basically cuts the skin of snails and slugs that crawl over it. As an alternative, you could also spread crushed egg shells around plants. Snails and slugs will tend to avoid slithering over them. At the same time, the shells provide an added benefit by adding calcium to your soil.
- Rotate your crops yearly. Changing planting locations within the same garden plot (and making sure that you replenish the soil each year with the addition of compost) helps create fertile and healthier soil conditions.
- Some plants repel garden pests and can be planted alongside your vegetables to keep insects away. For example, plant marigolds in your tomato patch.
- Some plants such as fennel, dill, clover, coriander, and sunflowers are especially good at attracting beneficial insects into your yard.
- Plant more than you need so that if you do have some losses, there is still plenty left over.
- Time your spraying so that you avoid hot sunny days when leaves could be burned in the process.
- Pick up larger, unwanted bugs and squish them with your fingers or pop them into a jar of water.
- Plant a variety of different vegetables in your garden for diversity. Pests tend to cause most problems when there is a lack of diversity in the garden.
- Do not use harmful synthetic chemical insecticides, which kill good bugs along with those that are causing problems.

