

Pests have enemies, too!



Aphids and Ladybugs

Aphids are tiny insect pests. They suck the sap from plants—vegetables, crops, flowers, and trees. They take away the plant's nutrients, and they can give the plant viruses. Aphids attract even more pests to the plant with the sweet, sticky juices they make.

Natural enemies that gobble up aphids are lacewings, assassin bugs, wasps, spiders, and chickadees.

But ladybugs (ladybird beetles) are the champion



Ladybugs look the same on both sides. Draw the rest of this ladybug's body.



Tips

For fighting aphids

- Pick off aphids from the underside of leaves, or spray them with water.
- Grow plants such as marigolds that attract aphids' natural enemies.
- Buy a bag of ladybugs from a garden nursery. Set them free in your yard.
- Make aphid traps to put outside.

Ladybugs won't harm any of your plants, but they eat many pests that do! Let ladybugs do their work!

Tip for Grown-ups:

When fighting spider mites or aphids, go for the least toxic ways. You can buy beneficial insects (enemies of pests) such as ladybugs and praying mantis egg cases at nurseries.

You can also spray the undersides of leaves with safe sprays. For an all-purpose garlic garden pest spray, peel and mash 1 head of garlic. Place it in a pint glass jar and cover with 2 cups boiling water. Screw on the lid and let set overnight. Strain. Freeze 1 cup for use later. Place the other cup in a spray bottle and add one more cup of water. Spray infested areas.

Try This!

Aphid Traps

The secret is to make your trap **YELLOW**, since that is the aphids' favorite color!

Trap 1: Find a yellow index card. Spread petroleum jelly over it. Place near aphid-infested plants.

Trap 2: Find a yellow dish. Fill it with soapy water. Place near aphid-infested plants.



When it hatches, a ladybug larva will eat about 400 aphids. As an adult, it may eat up to 5,000 more aphids! Insect sprays are the ladybug's number one danger!

