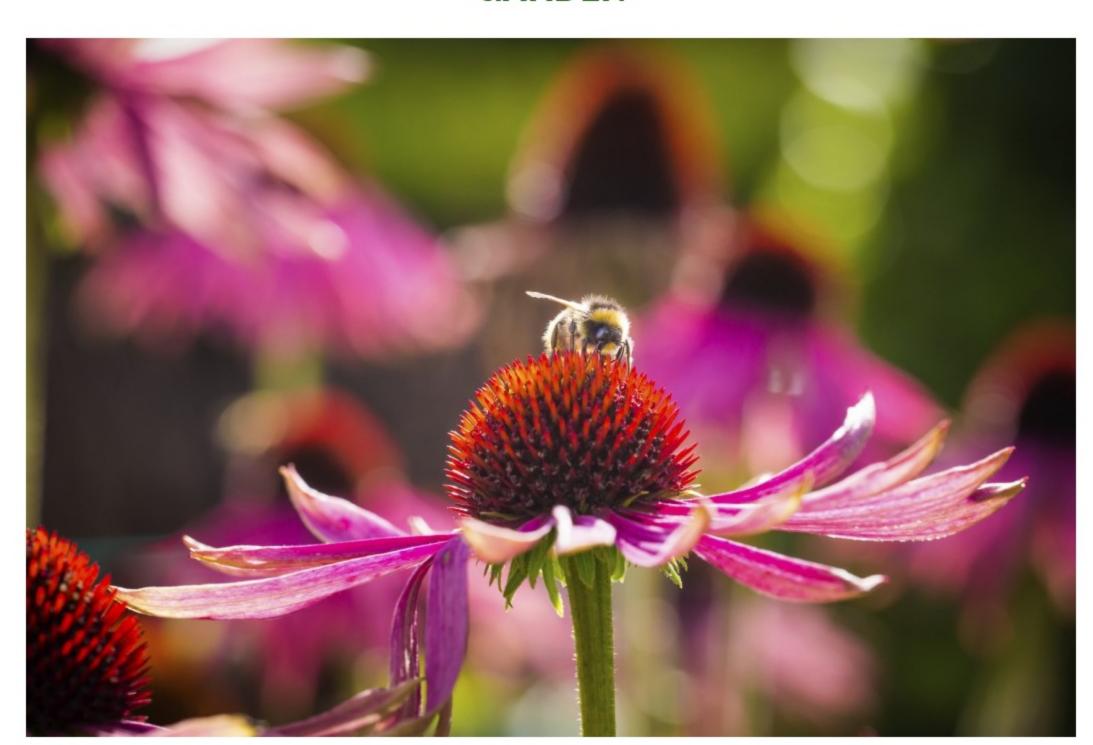
FLOWER GARDENING / VEGETABLE GARDENING / OUTDOOR LIVING / GARDEN FRESH RECIPES

FLOWER GARDENING TIPS / APRIL 11, 2016

### 6 BENEFICIAL INSECTS TO ATTRACT TO YOUR **GARDEN**



mong other pests, insects can sometimes be a pain, especially for a gardener. You may even wonder why you'd want insects around your plants at all. Believe it or not, there are actually many insects that help your garden!

These "good" insects can benefit your garden in a number of ways. Some, such as butterflies or bees, are great pollinators. Other beneficial insects rid gardens of the damaging pests that destroy your favorite plants.

### Types of Beneficial Insects

Of the beneficial insects that you should attract to your garden, there are three main types: pollinators, predators, and parasitoids. Each of the "3 P's" has a different means for the same end keeping your garden healthy and thriving.

Pollinators. These insects are probably the most well known of the helpful insect variety. Pollinators feed on the pollen or nectar of your flowers, pollinating your garden as they move from one plant to another. This helps your garden to grow and thrive.

**Predators.** As the name suggests, these insects prey on the pests that commonly destroy your luscious garden. Predatory insects

feast on the ravaging bugs, helping to reduce the populations in

your garden. Parasitoids. Parasitoids make up a much smaller category of helpful insects. Though parasitoids benefit your garden similarly to predators, it is only the larvae rather than the adults who prey on pests. Parasitoids lay their eggs inside of or on top of other insects,

#### **How to Attract Beneficial Insects**

which then become a meal once the eggs hatch.

We've gathered a list of 6 beneficial insects that will help your garden and what you can grow to attract them.

#### **Lady Bugs**

Type: Predator

Why to Attract Them: Probably the most recognizable insect on this list, lady bugs can benefit your garden in all stages of life. Adult lady bugs are known to consume aphids, mites, mealybugs and other pest insects - though aphids are their meal of choice, eating as many as 60 per day.

Lady bugs typically lay their eggs in clusters on the underside of leaves. Once hatched, their larvae will also reduce insect populations in your garden, and because they have a more general diet, more pests will be targeted. Lady bug larvae will eat insect eggs, beetle larvae, aphids, as well as other insects with soft bodies.

Plants That Attract Them: Dill, fennel, Queen Anne's lace, yarrow, angelica, marigold, coriander, sunflowers, buckwheat, and butterfly weed

Lacewings

Type: Predator Why to Attract Them: Lacewings are one of the most important predatory insects in the garden. These delicate, light green insects target one of the most damaging pests to our plants: aphids. Both adult lacewings and their larvae will reduce the populations of the negative insects plaguing your

Adults will consume aphids, whiteflies, mealy bugs, small caterpillars and

other soft-bodied insects. Females lay their eggs near patches of aphids, so that the larvae will have a healthy food supply after hatching. Larvae, also known as aphid lions, are insatiable eaters and will quickly rid your garden of insect eggs, thrips, and mites.

Plants That Attract Them: Lacewings require a healthy supply of nectar, honeydew, and pollen to make them stick around after reaching maturity. Sweet alyssum, coreopsis, angelica, dill, caraway, fennel, coriander, Queen Anne's lace, cosmos, and tansy are great options to keep them around.

## **Tachinid Flies**

Type: Parasitoid

Why to Attract Them: Tachinid flies are commonly found around the garden. They are occasionally mistaken for houseflies because of their similarly large size and bristly abdomen. Tachinid flies lay their eggs on top of beetles, caterpillars, and other insects. Upon hatching, the larvae burrow their way into their insect hosts and destroy your common garden pests from inside.

Plants That Attract Them: Dill, parsley, sweet clover, buckwheat, lemon balm, and crimson thyme

# **Soldier Beetles**

Type: Predator

Why to Attract Them: Adult soldier beetles are well-known predators of the most common garden pests such as aphids.

They are recognizable by their narrow body and red and black coloring. The larvae of this insect species typically live on the ground and prey on grubs, maggots, caterpillars, and other insects that live in the soil. Soldier beetles can target some beneficial insects as well, but will drastically reduce populations of harmful insects.

Plants That Attract Them: Catnip, goldenrod, sunflower, cosmos, hydrangea, marigold, and other

# Bees

Type: Pollinator

Why to Attract Them: Most plants rely on pollination to survive, particularly the plants we eat. In many cases, these plants require insects and birds to administrate the transfer of pollen. Bees are one such creature. When bees feed on nectar and pollen, some of the pollen clings to their body. As they move from plant to plant this pollen is transferred, helping gardens to grow and thrive. And with bee populations on a recent decline, creating a desirable habitat for them is good for everyone.

Plants That Attract Them: Aster, basil, bee balm, blanket flower, coneflower, geranium, goldenrod, lavender, marjoram, mint, poppy, sage, sunflower, thyme, zinnia, and any fruit-bearing tree or shrub

# **Butterflies**

Type: Pollinator

Why to Attract Them: As mentioned above, pollinating insects are an important part of having a healthy and productive garden. While some plants can pollinate themselves, most need the help of pollinating insects, birds, and other creatures. Butterflies will pollinate your plants as they move about the garden to feed, ensuring that your flowers flourish and fruiting plants reach full maturity. Plus, these beautiful insects are sure to make your garden even more eye-catching.

Plants That Attract Them: Sweet alyssum, butterfly bush, aster, lavender, yarrow, goldenrod, oregano, zinnia, calendula, fennel, daylily, purple coneflower, Queen Anne's lace, sage, and verbena

#### **Beneficial Insects in Your Garden** Do you want to know more about beneficial insects? Or have you spotted one of the insects above

in your garden? Let us know in the comments below. Plus, you can share pictures of your blossoming garden on your next visit to our Facebook. Be sure to subscribe to our e-newsletter to get the latest tips and advice from our experts, as well as

updates on new products and special deals.





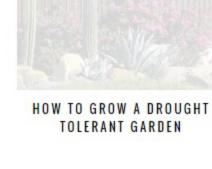
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