



# ECO-FRIENDLY GUIDE TO BENEFICIAL INSECTS

## ***don't kill the good guys!***

more than 90% of insects aren't pests. some pollinate our flowers and vegetables, while many others feed on pests in our gardens. by allowing them to do their job, we can reduce the need for pesticides and maintain a good quality of water.

## ***resources***

- \* A Field Guide to Common Texas Insects  
Drees & Jackman*
- \*The Texas Bug Book - the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, Malcolm Beck & Howard Garrett*
- \*Natural Enemies Handbook-The Illustrated Guide to Biological Pest Control, University of California Press*
- \*Common Sense Pest Control, William Olkowski, et al.*
- \*<http://hortipm.tamu.edu/pestprofiles/beneficials.html>*

## 1. Know Who the "Good Guys" Are

- \*Learn to recognize egg, larval, pupal and adult stages of beneficial insects
- \*Learn about their life cycles and feeding habits
- \*Learn to recognize signs of beneficial insects at work, such as hollow-looking, tan-colored aphids, which are the remains of aphids that have been parasitized
- \*Don't be afraid of stinging insects like wasps and bees; they help pollinate garden vegetables and fruits and are only aggressive around their nests or when provoked

## 2. Have Patience

- \*It may take awhile for beneficial populations to build up to control a pest outbreak
- \*Be willing to tolerate a minor amount of damage
- \*Monitor outbreak areas to determine whether a population of beneficials is rising and may soon control a pest outbreak

## 3. Make Wise Product Choices

- \*When spraying is necessary, select a narrow spectrum product whenever possible. Broad-spectrum insecticides don't discriminate between pests and beneficial insects - they kill both
- \*Choose an insecticide that won't harm other insect eating garden creatures like birds, bats, spiders, lizards, and toads
- \*Treat only the area of the outbreak
- \*Choose products that break down quickly like soaps, oils or pyrethrum sprays

## 4. Make a Home for Beneficials in your Yard

- \*Provide an accessible source of water, such as a birdbath or periodic sprinkling
- \*Plant flowering plants that provide nectar for adult beneficials to feed upon; better nectar sources include plants with umbrella-shaped bloom heads (Yarrow, Anise, Dill)
- \*Plant a few Tropical Milkweed or Guara plants to maintain aphids for beneficials to feed on

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