



## WHAT IS A BENEFICIAL?

Many insects, fungi, and bacteria can benefit your garden in one way or another. Beneficials come in many shapes and sizes and each help your garden in their own way, including controlling pests and pollinating plants. Creating a suitable habitat in your garden will attract beneficials, helping you to have a sustainable garden and support native wildlife.

When relying on beneficials as a form of pest control you must be patient and tolerant of a few pests in your garden, and some damage to your plants. Without a few pests around your beneficials won't have anything to eat!

**Here are some tips for creating an inviting habitat:**

## HAVE FLOWERS IN BLOOM

Native wildflowers are great for attracting beneficials. Because insects are attracted to pollen and nectar, aim to have flowers in bloom at all times throughout the growing season. When one pollen source disappears, another will take its place. Plant diversity helps to attract a diverse range of beneficials. Many beneficials are

attracted to daisy-shaped flowers, which not only provide pollen and nectar, but also a place for them to rest. Planting herbs and flowering perennials in and near your other plants will entice beneficials.

## MAINTAIN A WATER SUPPLY

Ponds, bird baths and sprinklers will provide water to attract beneficials. Drip irrigation systems do not offer an adequate water supply for them. Filling a shallow dish with rocks and water will accommodate all types of insects, giving them a place to drink without drowning.

## PROVIDE SHELTER

Mulching your garden and having stepping stones will provide a moist environment for beneficials to hide in. Leave some habitat in the form of spent perennials – it's a great way to put off fall tidying!

## NO PESTICIDE USE

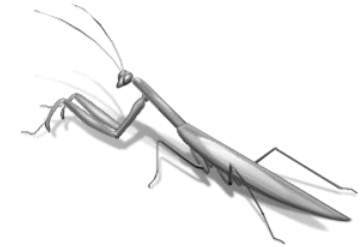
Pesticide use can kill all insects in the area – good and bad, including food for future generations of beneficials. Because beneficials have a smaller population they have a harder time bouncing back than pests, allowing pests to come back faster and stronger. When you must use pesticides, be mindful of what, when and how much you use to minimize the damage to beneficials.

Spraying after the sun has gone down will help minimize exposing beneficials to chemicals. NEVER spray a plant in bloom! That is when the plant is most attractive and beneficials are most present, increasing the chance of harm.



## COVER CROPS

Are often used to protect and enrich areas in your garden that will remain unplanted for a period of time. In this case, the crop must be plowed under before going to seed. Consider planting a cover crop in part of your garden and *allowing* it to flower – it's one of the best sources of nutrition for attracting beneficials when food is scarce.



## EVERYDAY HERO BENEFICIALS

Here's a list of the beneficial insects most commonly found in the home garden:

**Ladybugs** are well known for eating aphids, but are also helpful when controlling scale, thrips, mealybugs and spider mites. They feast on flowers containing lots of nectar and especially like yarrow.

**Bees** are the best at pollinating our plants; they love flowers that are bursting with nectar and pollen. Bees can't get enough of rosemary, lavender, sunflower and cover crops.

**Ground Beetles** like to eat slugs, cutworms and snails. You will attract them with the right habitat; they like to hide beneath stepping stones, rocks and under the soil.

**Parasitic Wasps** help control whiteflies, scale, codling moths and cutworms. They like alyssum, yarrow and clover.

**Praying Mantis** eat moths, aphids, beetles, caterpillars, butterflies and grasshoppers. They like to hide in raspberries, roses, grasses and shrubs.

## PLANTS THAT ATTRACT BENEFICIALS

### ANNUALS

Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)  
Ammi  
Argeranthemum – Marguerite Daisies  
Calendula  
Cornflower (*Centaurea sp.*)/ Bachelor Buttons  
Cosmos  
Cosmos bipinnatus  
Gazanias  
Helianthus - Sunflower  
Lobelia erinus – Edging lobelia  
Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella damascena*)  
Marigold  
Salvia  
Statice  
Zinnia

### HERBS

Basil  
Buckwheat  
Bronze Fennel  
Caraway  
Chives  
Cilantro  
Dill  
Feverfew  
Garlic Chives  
Lavender  
Lemon Balm  
Lovage  
Parsley  
Pennyroyal  
Rosemary  
Sage  
Spearmint  
Thyme  
Yarrow



### PERENNIALS

Allium sp.  
Aster sp.  
Astrantia major - Masterwort  
Angelica sp.  
Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)  
Artemisia sp.  
Basket of Gold (*Alyssum saxatile*)  
Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)  
Callirhoe involucrata - Purple poppy mallow  
Chrysanthemum sp.  
Coreopsis - Tickseed  
Cynara - Cardoon  
Erigeron - Fleabane  
Gaillardia - Blanket Flower  
Helianthus salicifolius  
Hesperis (Dame's Rocket)  
Monarda sp. - Bergamot/Bee Balm  
Penstemon sp.  
Potentilla sp. - Cinquefoil  
Purple Coneflower - *Echinacea purpurea*  
Rudbeckia fulgida - Gloriosa daisy  
Salvia  
Scabiosa – Pincushion Flower  
Sedum kamtschaticum - Orange stonecrop  
Sedum spurium & album - Stonecrops  
Solidago goldenrod  
Stachys officinalis - Wood betony  
Tanacetum parthenium - Feverfew  
Veronica spicata - Spike speedwell  
Viola - Violet  
Yarrow (*Achillea sp.*)

### FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/plants-to-attract-beneficial-insects-zl0z1005zvau.aspx#axzz2w3LoWUdu>

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/horticulture/about/basic-gardening-info/garden-beneficial-insects/>

<http://www.reneesgarden.com/articles/Beneficial%20Insects%20Guide.pdf>

Best Practices

# Attracting Beneficials

Enlisting Your Neighborhood Hit  
Squad to Stop Invaders Naturally



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