**DRAGONFLY**

**Aliases:** skimmer, dammer, clubtail  
**Wanted For:** Preying on unsuspecting flying insects such as mosquitoes, flies, and midges.  
**Family History:** A deadly predator able to catch prey in mid-air. Dragonfly larvae (nymphs) live in water and are efficient hunters, eating mosquito larvae and other insects, snails, and small fish. Known Accomplices: Often seen in the company of its relative, the damselfly (lower right) another insect predator. Don’t be fooled; when at rest, dragonflies hold their wings outstretched while damselflies fold their wings closed over their bodies.  
**Sightings:** Last seen near garden ponds, streams, and other bodies of water.

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**GREEN LACEWING**

**Aliases:** aphid lion, walking trashpile  
**Wanted For:** Aggressively devouring aphids, thrips, mealybugs, scales, spider mites, leafhoppers, and insect eggs.  
**Family History:** Adult green lacewings feed on nectar, pollen, and honeydew—at dawn and dusk. Juveniles are voracious predators known to eat up to 20 or 30 aphids a day.  
**Sightings:** Last seen around nectar-producing plants such as sunflowers, tansy, and buckwheat.

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**SOLDIER BEETLE**

**Aliases:** leatherwing, cantharid  
**Wanted For:** Attacking and feeding on aphids and other soft-bodied insects.  
**Family History:** Adults feed on pollen and insect pests on plants. The larvae, or young, hunt for pests in leaf litter and soil.  
**Sightings:** Known to feed on the pollen of flowers such as goldenrods and milkweed while waiting for its prey. Reports of sightings appear in early spring, shortly after aphids begin hatching.

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**GROUND BEETLE**

**Aliases:** spiny burrower, sandhopper, dung beetle  
**Wanted For:** Conspiring to eat many soil-dwelling pests such as slugs, snails, cutworms, and root maggots.  
**Family History:** Fast-moving predator armed with strong jaws. Generally dark brown or black with long legs, and shiny, hard front wing covers that sometimes have a metallic sheen. Usually hunts at night. Reported to be able to consume its body weight in food each day. Larvae also feed on soil insects.  
**Sightings:** Usually sighted hiding in soil or under rocks, dried leaves, and mulch.

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**SPIDER**

**Aliases:** orb weaveur, crab spider, wolf spider  
**Wanted For:** Trapping and bug-napping a variety of insect pests.  
**Family History:** The most deadly natural enemy of pests, spiders are skilled predators. They use webs to trap their victims or track them on the ground and on plants. Spiders can be identified as arachnids, with eight legs and two body parts.  
**Sightings:** All over the garden and on porches near lights.  
**Warning:** Spiders are thought of as fearsome creepy-crawlers, but very few have a bite that is harmful. Always wear gloves when cleaning garages, debris, woodpiles, storage areas, or piles of clutter.

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**TACHINID FLY**

**Aliases:** feather-legged fly  
**Wanted For:** Attacking unsuspecting caterpillars and beetles.  
**Family History:** Disguised as a hairy housefly, this parasitic insect lays its eggs on caterpillars, grubs, and other insects. When the eggs hatch, the larvae tunnel into their victims and eat them.  
**Sightings:** Adults are often seen stealing the nectar and pollen of tansy, milkweed, and Queen Anne’s lace.

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**LADYBEETLE**

**Aliases:** ladybug, ladybird beetle  
**Wanted For:** Gorging on soft-bodied insects such as aphids, scales, thrips, mealybugs, and spider mites.  
**Family History:** Adults and larvae eat large numbers of pests. One ladybug can devour 5,000 aphids in its lifetime. The most common suspect is red and black spots, but watch for many other species in a variety of colors, with or without spots.  
**Sightings:** Known to lay on nectar-rich flowers such as yarrow, yarrow, and tansy, and clover.  
**Warning:** Be on the lookout for a ladybug look-alike: the spotted cucumber beetle! This green beetle with black spots is the Master of Disguise:

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**TOP 10 MOST WANTED BUGS IN YOUR GARDEN**

**WHY YOU WANT THESE BUGS IN YOUR GARDEN**

Most insects found in your garden don’t harm plants. In fact, 97 percent of the insects you see fall into this category! Such insects are called beneficials because they benefit the garden by pollinating plants, improving soil, and eating the pests that really harm plants. These hard-working beneficials can be a gardener’s best friend.

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**SYRPHID FLY**

**Aliases:** hover fly, flower fly  
**Wanted For:** Hunting down aphids, mealybugs, and other pests, and for pollinating plants.  
**Family History:** Adults are known to be important pollinators. The larvae suck the juices out of their insect victims. A single larva can consume hundreds of victims per month.  
**Sightings:** Larvae are usually found under leaves in the company of aphids. Adults can be seen lurking around sunflowers, feverfew, and other nectar-rich flowers.  
**Master of Disguise:** With their yellow and black stripes, the adults appear to be bees, but they have only one set of wings and can’t sting. The larvae look like fat, legless caterpillars.
• HAVE A SMART YARD
  • Provide shelter and overwintering sites by covering bare dirt with an organic mulch such as loamy or bark. Leave a small area of exposed soil to encourage solitary native bees that are ground nesters.
  • Include a variety of pollen- and nectar-rich plants to provide a supplemental food source.
  • Pesticides (particularly broad-spectrum pesticides that don’t target single pests) kill the beneficials as well as true garden pests. Only target treat pests to protect beneficial insects.
  • Minced garden chemicals also affect water quality and other wildlife when rain or overwatering move the chemicals to storm drains and surface waters. For information on pesticide alternatives, go to http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0351/ANR-0351.pdf.

RESOURCES TO HELP EXPAND YOUR SEARCH
Bugs
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0351/ANR-0351.pdf
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0351/ANR-0351.pdf
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-2140/ANR-2140.pdf
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-2140/ANR-2140.pdf
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-2140/ANR-2140.pdf
Bug Guide: ID, Images for Insects, Spiders & Their Kin
www.bugguide.net
www.bugwood.org
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-2031/ANR-2031.pdf
Native Plants
www.findnativeplants.com
www.floraofalabama.org
Natural Enemies Gallery
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/NE/index.html
Pesticide Alternatives (Least Toxic)
www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1428/ANR-1428.pdf

TOP 10 MOST WANTED BUGS IN YOUR GARDEN

An adult of a common large milkweed bug photographed great

The yellow center or disc flowers stand out distinctly from the yellow, daisy-like flowers occur singly atop long stems. Blooms in the summer. AKA: Coreopsis sp.

QUEEN ANNE’S LACE

POPCORN

MOUND MINT

MOUNTAIN MINT

GOLDENROD

PURPLE CONEFLOWER

COCKSCOMB

Cockscomb

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