

IN SEARCH OF LADYBUGS

The Lost Ladybug Project

NATIVE LADYBUGS ARE DISAPPEARING. JOIN THE LOST LADYBUG PROJECT AND HELP FIND THEM!

DISAPPEARING LADYBUGS

Some species of native ladybugs in North America are disappearing. In the past 20 years, these beneficial predators of garden, forest and farm pests have become extremely rare. The Lost Ladybug Project is asking for everyone's help finding ladybugs!

WHAT ARE LADYBUGS?

Ladybugs are not actually bugs, they are beetles. These insects are in the Coccinellidae family of the beetle order, Coleoptera. Ladybugs help control insect infestations by eating pests like aphids and scale insects. They enable gardeners and farmers to use less pesticides and chemicals to protect their crops. A single ladybug may eat more than 5,000 aphids in her lifetime – one year!

HOW DID LADYBUGS GET THEIR NAME?

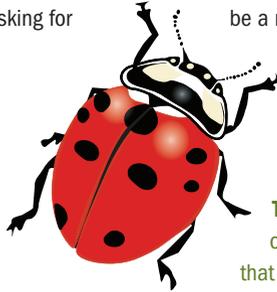
Legend says that during the Middle Ages in Europe, swarms of aphids were destroying crops. The farmers prayed to the Virgin Mary for help – and help came in an insect that devoured the plant-destroying pests and saved the crops. The grateful farmers named these insects "Beetles of Our Lady," which became "Lady Beetles." In some places they are called ladybirds or ladybird beetles.

WHY ARE THEY BRIGHTLY COLORED?

Ladybugs' bright colors and spots serve as a warning to predators that the beetle will release a distasteful fluid if attacked. Because of this, birds don't really like to eat them.

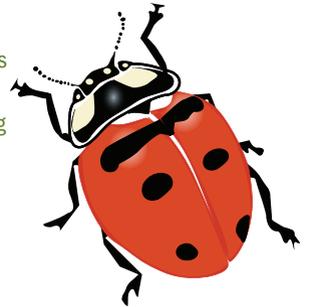
MISSING NATIVES

The two-spot, nine-spot and the transverse ladybugs were once common, but now they are very rare. The good news is that they are not extinct. There may be a rare ladybug in your backyard right now!



Nine-spotted ladybug has four spots on each wing and one split in the middle. Until 20 years ago, it was one of the most common ladybugs across the U.S. and Canada.

Transverse ladybug has markings on its back that resemble ink drops that have slipped sideways, forming a black band close to the front. This ladybug was once very common but is now almost as rare as its nine-spotted cousin.



Two-spotted ladybug is usually bright red with two dark spots on its wings.



This beetle is considered native to both North America and Europe. Although it is still occasionally collected in the midwestern U.S., this ladybug may soon be gone from much of its former range.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Entomologists need you to look for ladybugs, take pictures and submit them to The Lost Ladybug Project. Looking for ladybugs is as simple as searching in your backyard and neighborhood. The best time to look is early summer. Look in lush plant growth, agricultural fields that haven't been sprayed with pesticides and near wild flowers, weeds, trees and shrubs.

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Scientists need detailed information on which ladybugs are still out there and how many individuals can be found. Here's how to participate in our research project:

① **COLLECT**
Go out and collect ladybugs!

③ **TAKE THEIR PICTURE**
If you find any ladybugs, take pictures of them all! Please do not kill the insects.

② **TAKE NOTES**
Note the date, time, location, and habitat (for example, wetlands, meadow, garden).

④ **SEND THE INFO**
To send the information with the digital images go to www.lostladybug.org. If you do not have a digital camera, send color prints to Lost Ladybug Project, Cornell University, Department of Entomology, 4117 Cornstock Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853.

⑤ **RETURN THEM**
Please release the ladybugs safely where you found them.

For more information, activities and a field guide, visit lostladybug.org.