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Natural Pest Control

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Is your garden buggy? We all want organic gardens teeming with beneficial insects. They certainly provide the most natural way to manage pests.

You can attract beneficials to your garden and encourage them to stay by providing water, shelter, and alternate food.

Plant a buffet of blooms to provide an alternate food source of nectar and pollen that beneficals can feed on when they can't find pests. Plan to provide blooms throughout the whole season and use native plants for best results.

Groups of flowers that provide plenty of nectar and pollen:

- Flowering plants in the mint family; spearmint, wild bergamot, horehound, and catnip.
- Flowering plants in the daisy family; pot marigold, zinnia, gerbera, coneflower, aster, chamomile, and cosmos.
- Flowering plants in the carrot family; angelica or wild celery, dill, fennel, parsley, and cilantro.
- Wildflowers in the mustard family; toothwort, rocket, watercress, and western wallflower.
- Flowering plants with extrafloral nectaries (nectar producing glands, physically apart from the flowers); passion flower, hibiscus, sunflower, tube flower, trumpet flower, and peony.

Design gardens with plants in groups of eight or more for better attraction.

Provide shelter for your beneficials by growing native shrubs, ground covers, and grasses. Don't forget to provide some form of water.

Some of the top beneficals are Ladybugs, Praying Mantises, Aphid Midges, Braconid Wasps, Damsel Bugs, Ground Beetles, Soldier Beetles, Lacewings, Minute Pirate Bugs, Assassin Bugs, and Tachinid Flies.

Birds also eat harmful insects so be sure to provide for them.

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