

# Attract Beneficial Insects to Protect Your Garden

From the Morris Plains Beautification Committee

Beneficials are insects that help gardeners by eating garden pests. Lady beetles (lady bugs), assassin bugs, lacewings, soldier beetles, spiders, and predatory wasps are all examples of beneficial insects. Your job is to give them the food, water, and shelter they need to thrive, and they will reward you by patrolling your garden.

- **Avoid the use of pesticides.** Pesticides tend to be indiscriminate, killing beneficial insects as well as insect pests. Use the least disruptive options such as soaps, oils, microbials, or botanicals.
- **Create a garden that celebrates diversity.** Include both annual and perennial ground covers, shrubs, trees, turfgrass, and add decorative rock accents, which will provide shelter for insect predators!
- **Plant lots of different kinds of flowers.** Flowers provide pollen and nectar that beneficials need and that will sustain them when pest populations are low.
- **Provide water.** A shallow dish of water filled with pebbles or gravel and placed in a sheltered area will give small beneficials a safe place to drink. Change the water regularly to prevent mosquitos from laying eggs there.
- **Plan for a full season of bloom.** Include varieties of flowering plants that bloom throughout the year.
- **Tolerate a small number of pests.** This will provide a continuous food supply for beneficial bugs.

