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## Plants That Attract Beneficial Insects

Many would instantly turn to insecticide. I don't like to do that because most insecticides out there harm the good bugs as well as the bad ones. So what are we to do?

One option is horticultural soap, but it must land on the bug to work. Neem oil will work (it is ingested), but it requires repeated application (as does the soap). I read it should only be sprayed when bees (and other beneficial bugs) are NOT present (dawn or dusk). I am also reading that beneficial bugs aren't out at dawn and dusk. Really? I find it amazing. Too amazing to fully believe that ONLY bad bugs are out at dawn and dusk.



What sounds MUCH easier to me is to cultivate a lot of GOOD bugs which EAT bad bugs. I have been very concerned in recent years about the lace bug problem and found an [article about bugs which eat lace bug](#) here. And while it's good to buy some lacewing larvae, once they've dispatched with the first crop of lace bugs, how will they sustain themselves over time? We must provide habitat for the good bugs, so they can develop large enough populations to decimate the bad guys.

I've assembled a list of plants that service a variety of good bugs. There are many more plants than I have listed, but I selected ones that are edible or particularly ornamental (and not so weedy). There are a few that can get away from you — they are noted. I have also noted that some of these plants are beneficial for bees, mostly what I am selecting for on this list are plants I'd be happy having in an ornamental garden that attract predator insects that destroy the bad bugs.

### Plants That Attract Beneficial Insects [table caption="" width="600"

colwidth="170|130|50|150" colalign="left|left|center|left"]

Botanical Name,Common Name,Attributes\*,Comments

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Achillea spp. , Yarrow ,"N,O",Some species are native. Many colors.

Agastache foeniculum , Anise Hyssops,O, Many colors,

Ajuga reptans , Carpet bugleweed ,O,

Alyssum maritima , Sweet Alyssum ,O,

Alyssum saxatilis , Basket of Gold ,O,

Anethum graveolens , Dill ,E,Can become invasive.

Angelica gigas , Angelica,O,

Anthemis tinctoria , Golden marguerite ,O,

Armeria spp. ," Sea Pink, Thrift ",O,

Bellis perennis , English Daisy ,O,

Borago officinalis , Borage ,"E,O",  
 Coriandrum sativum , Coriander ,E,  
 Coreopsis spp. , Tickseed,O,  
 Cornus sericea , Red-twig Dogwood ,"N,O ",Some species are native.  
 Cosmos bipinnatus , Cosmos ,O,  
 Deschampsia caespitosa ,Tufted hair grass,O,  
 Dianthus , Carnation ,O,  
 Echinacea , Coneflower,O,  
 Foeniculum vulgare , Fennel ,E,  
 ,"Can be very invasive, try to buy only the variety 'Azoricum' or 'Florence Fennel'. It grows much smaller,  
 too."[attr colspan="3"]  
 Gaillardia , Blanketflower ,"B,N,O",  
 Gaultheria shallon , Salal ,"N,O",  
 Iberis umbellata , Candytuft ,O,  
 Lavendula , Lavender,O,  
 Leucanthemum spp. , Daisy ,O ,Some species are native.  
 Liatris spp. , Blazing Star ,O,  
 Liriope spicata , Creeping Lilyturf , O,  
 Mahonia spp., Oregon Grape ,"B,E,N,O",  
 Muhlenbergia rigens ,Deer grass,O,  
 Nepeta cataria , Catmint ,O,  
 Origanum vulgare , Oregano/Marjoram ,"E,O",  
 Physocarpus spp. , Ninebark ,"B,N,O ",Some species are native.  
 Ribes sanguinum , Red-flowering Current ,"B,E,N,O",  
 Rosmarinus officinallis , Rosemary ,"E,O",  
 Salvia spp. , Sage ,O,  
 Sedum spp. , Stonecrop ,"B,N,O ",Some species are native.  
 Solidago altissima , Goldenrod ,"B,O",  
 Taraxacum officinale , Dandelion ,E,  
 ,"I realize this is the evil dandelion we all despise, but it can be a very beneficial plant excreting minerals  
 and nitrogen from it's roots. And it is a great host for beneficial insects."[attr colspan="3"]  
 Thymus spp. , Thyme ,"E,O",  
 Vaccinium ovatum , Evergreen Huckleberry ,"B,E,N,O",  
 "Clovers — I have been encouraging Dutch White Clover (Trifolium repens) in lawns for a variety of reason  
 this is just one more. And plant Crimson Clover (Trifolium incarnatum) as a cover crop or a transitional  
 ground cover while you are staging in portions of a new or remodeled landscape."[attr colspan="4"]  
 [/table]

\*Attributes: B=Bees E=Edible N=Native in Pacific Northwest O=Ornamental

Resources:

- <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/flowers-borders?page=0,11>
- [http://www.farmerfred.com/plants\\_that\\_attract\\_benefi.html](http://www.farmerfred.com/plants_that_attract_benefi.html)
- [http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm\\_tips/Beneficial.html](http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm_tips/Beneficial.html)
- [http://www.dennis7dees.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/info\\_sheet\\_beneficial\\_insects.pdf](http://www.dennis7dees.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/info_sheet_beneficial_insects.pdf)
- [The Natural Enemies Handbook](#) by Mary Louise Flint. University of California Press, 1999.

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