

IPM

Instead of using Pesticides which have been linked to a wide range of human health and environment hazards we recommend the Integrated Pest Management which is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach that makes use of a variety of tools in controlling pests through a four-tiered approach.

- Set Action Thresholds: Finding a single pest does not always mean pest control is needed;
- Monitor and Identify Pests: Many pests are not harmful, and some are even beneficial;
- Prevent: Proper maintenance to create unfavorable environment for pests to colonize, grow, and reproduce
- Control: Finding a pest solution that is effective and poses the lowest risk if all four steps have been reviewed and pest still causes a problem

RESOURCES



Florida

Wildflowers-

<http://flawildflowers.org/resources/pdfs/2014/10EasyWildflowers.pdf>



Beneficial Insects -

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/hot_topics/sustainable_living/beneficial_insects.shtml



Integrated Pest Management

Florida- <http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>



Lee County Extension-

<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/GardenHome.shtml>

YOUR NEW CREW



SUPPORTING OUR INSECTS IN PROMOTING PESTICIDE FREE YARDS








My mission is to not only protect our environment through providing alternative measures of pest control but to also look after the health and safety of our children and future generations.

“Insects besides mankind are part of the animal kingdom, destroying them in turn will destroy us.”

Joanna Heath








OUR INSECTS

Remember that 99% of our insects are either benign or beneficial and serve a purpose, they may be pollinators, decomposers, predators or food for someone higher up in the food chain and we are utterly dependent on them; however, pesticide usage not only destroys them but has proven to have a negative impact on our health and our environment. Allow us to introduce you to some of our greatest beneficial insects.

-  Honey Bees – one out of every three bites of food we eat is a result of our pollinators
-  Lady Beetles and Soldier Bugs – consume pest insects as food so they are excellent predators
-  Parasitoid Wasps and other parasites - use pests as nurseries for their young
-  Ants and Spiders – eat termites and termite larvae. Also ants tunneling mixes and aerates the soil, in some places replacing the activity of an earth worm
-  Dragonflies – are great hunters with excellent eyesight and great speed, their prey are mosquitos and midges


OUR PLANTS

Diversifying native plants will support many beneficial insects' life that is integral to the health and balance of the entire landscape. The following plants are native to SW Florida and support our beneficial insect army. You are certainly not limited to these native plants and can source out others that most suit you.

-  Native trees: Sweet Acacia, Redbud, Flatwoods Plum
-  Native Shrubs: Jamaica Caper, Yaupon Holly, Privet Cassia or Privet Wild Sensitive Plant, Bahama Cassia, Chapman's Wild Sensitive Plant, Blueberry, Walter's Viburnum, Elderberry, Fiddlewood
-  Native Vines: Climbing Aster
-  Native Groundcovers: Sunshine Mimosa
-  Native Wildflowers: Calamint, Partridge Pea, Maryland Goldenaster, Yellowtop, Dune Sunflower, Blazing Star, Dotted Horsemint, Goldenrods, Spiderwort
-  Native Palms: Dwarf Palmetto, Cabbage Palm, Saw Palmetto
-  Native Grasses: Elliot's Lovegrass, Purple Lovegrass, Muhlygrass

OUR WEEDS

Weeds also play a huge role in the biology of many beneficial insects. The presence of certain weeds increases the population of beneficial insects and therefore reduces pest damage. How many weeds are too many? The key is balance and try in avoiding encouraging weeds with running root systems that can quickly overtake the landscape like bindweed, Canada thistle, and Japanese knotweed. While having these plants, in which some gardeners may consider weeds, they do provide resources for beneficial insects. Here are some of the few.

-  Seaside Goldenrod – bright yellow plant, important resource for our predatory wasps, the gall larvae provides nutrition for bird, provides food and shelter for butterflies, birds and small mammals.
-  Lamb's Quarter – produces green flowers that form in clusters on top of spikes, the leaves resemble the shape of a goosefoot, beneficial to insects and us as the leaves, shoots and flowers can also be eaten by us in salads or added to smoothies and juices
-  Smartweed – plant that flowers begin green then turn whitish or light pink, also provide habitats for many micro and macro invertebrates
-  Stinging Nettle - bears small, greenish or brownish, numerous flowers, exclusive larval food plant for several species like butterflies but careful it can sting!

Note that Clover, Speedwell, Chickweed, Dandelions and other weeds aren't necessarily the enemy so relax you anti-weed morals and let some of them be.