

Who are you calling a lady?



Ladybug is another name for the Ladybird Beetle. There are around five thousand kinds of ladybugs, and not all of them are red and black. A ladybug's wings can be yellow or orange with black spots, or can even be completely black. Some ladybugs even have stripes instead of spots! The bright colors of the ladybug warn birds and other predators that they will not be good to eat, and they can give off a bad-smelling chemical if they are disturbed, to convince predators to go away.

Ladybugs have a big appetite. Their favorite food is the aphid, a tiny white insect that lives on plants. A single ladybug can eat as many as 75 aphids a day! Ladybugs also eat thrips, mites and other insects that can be harmful to plants, which is why ladybugs are called "beneficial" insects by gardeners.

The ladybug lays a group of tiny, yellow eggs on the underside of leaves, usually near a colony of aphids. A newly hatched ladybug larvae will eat up to 400 aphids in the first two weeks of life, which is about how long it takes them to become fully grown. During this time they will shed their skin several times. Once they reach full size, they stop eating, attach themselves to a leaf or a stem, and become a pupa. Inside the pupa, much like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly in a cocoon, the larvae turns into an adult ladybug. It eventually emerges, and comes out hungry!

1. What is another name for a ladybug? _____

2. What do ladybugs eat? _____

3. Do ladybugs have stripes or spots? _____

4. What color are a ladybug's wings? _____

5. How do ladybugs help gardeners? _____

6. How many aphids do a ladybug larvae eat in 2 weeks? _____