



Next Trend?

So - we've done butterflies, bees, native plants and wildlife. We've also all heard of gardening for beneficial bugs - but the next trend takes gardening for beneficial bugs to a new level. The word for it is "Insectary", which is gardening for insects in general.

We usually think of insects only in terms of the damage they do to plants. We don't think of insects as pollinators, although they do quite a bit of pollination and many predators require pollen and nectar as a part of a balanced diet. There are numerous insects that we dislike but are great garden bugs.

Earwigs - yuck! I hate them! They do eat on plants but more importantly they are voracious carnivores. They eat centipedes, millipedes and spiders. One of my favorites is the Masked Hunter (a type of Assassin Bug). He is so ugly he's actually cute! Don't get too close because he will bite, but he is an insect carnivore, eating any other insect that is close enough to catch.

The Tachinid Fly is another awesome bug to have in the garden. They eat caterpillars and pesky moth species. They look very much like a bee and are often seen drinking nectar from flowers. However they do not damage the flowers. They lay their eggs on them for the pesky caterpillars to eat and then the babies hatch inside. I don't think I need to tell you what happens next!



Common Ground Beetle What about this guy? I find them all the time and I hate them (especially when they get into my house). It's the Common Ground Beetle. I usually find them under my mulch layer and have to admit I kill them more often than not. But these guys can live in your garden as a killing machine for 3-4 years, eating slugs, snails, flies and maggots, caterpillars, grubs, other beetles, aphids, weevils - pretty much anything they can catch.



Working in a nursery I get to see lots of strange bugs. I often tell myself to look them up and see if they are good or bad. I do my best to walk away telling them they had better not be here when I get back! The buzz of this upcoming trend is; you have to have some bad in order to have good. (How else would we know what bad is?!?) Also you will have to learn that you can't expect picture-perfect plants unless you Photoshop them. This new trend might be hard for some to handle - not everyone's tolerance level is as lazy as mine!



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