

Ladybug, Ladybug, Stay Around My Home

Long a favorite of children for its beauty, of farmers and gardeners for its voracious predatory appetite, the weak-sighted ladybug is being increasingly put to far-sighted use by individuals, horticulturists and civic officials seeking an alternative to chemical pesticides.

In Palo Alto, Calif. park officials released 300,000 of the winged beauties to do battle with ugly plant pests.

Gardeners in Albuquerque, N.M. scattered over 2½ million ladybugs last spring to protect their plants.

In Medford, Ore. the rose

firm of Jackson & Perkins, invited thousands of ladybugs to an aphid feast in their rose test garden.

According to the National Geographic, there are 4,300 known species of the ladybug family, of which North America is happy host to 370.

Remember this? "Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home, your house is on fire, your children will burn."

was an entreaty by English farmers concerned for the safety of the ladybugs during the annual burning of hop fields.

The little ladybug is big trouble to a number of harmful insects, including such pests as alfalfa weevils and Colorado potato beetles. But given half a chance, ladybugs will dine all day on aphids, each one eating up to 50 of the pests a day.

Ladybugs were first put to work by man, says the National Geographic, in the late 1800s when a species called *Rodolia cardinalis* was imported into California from Australia to combat the cottony cushion scale insect.

In two years the tiny immigrants had saved what has since become a hundred million dollar industry; there initial cost was \$1,500.

Gardeners don't have to be overly concerned with the cost of ladybugs. They are sold by the pint, quart and gallon. A half-pint - about 4,000 - costs \$2. The 300,000 purchased by Palo Alto were a \$30 bargain.

The only concern is in getting the tiny migratory horticulturists not to fly away home. Studies in California have shown that 90 per cent wing off on release.

Since they don't fly at night, a late afternoon or early evening release will enhance the probability of an overnight - and possibly longer - stay.

Researchers are working on various methods to lessen their migratory instinct.

But until then, gardeners who invite the polka-dotted ladies to dinner will hope they become permanent guests.



TAKE A LADYBUG out to lunch. Bill Fyke, horticulturist for the rose-growing firm of Jackson and Perkins, releases several thousand ladybugs in the firm's test garden.

World Adventure In Flower Seeds

New seed displays are brightening up stores across the country - and some fascinating stories surround the origins of many of the flower seed varieties on display.

Most have been discovered by plant explorers who risked life and limb in strange countries in their search for new flowers to beautify our gardens.

Indeed, the greatest voyage of discovery before man went to the moon was sponsored by a botanist, Sir Joseph Banks, who 200 years ago financed the expeditions of Captain James Cook.

which resulted in the discovery of New Zealand, Hawaii and Alaska.

More modest plant expeditions are in progress today, and since 1956 the United States Department of Agriculture has sent 13 plant expeditions around the world.

China has been a rich source of new flowers, including hollyhocks, oriental poppies and asters.

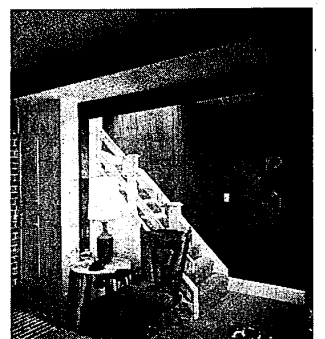
Africa has yielded carnations and snapdragons, while Europe gave us sweet peas foxgloves, and shirley-poppies.

From South America came

the columbine, gloriosa daisies, phlox and California poppies.

All these popular garden flowers are very easy-to-grow, and can be found in most seed displays in your local store.

Take a new look at the beautiful array, and bring a world of beauty into your garden this year.



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