



NATIONAL WILDFLOWER RESEARCH CENTER

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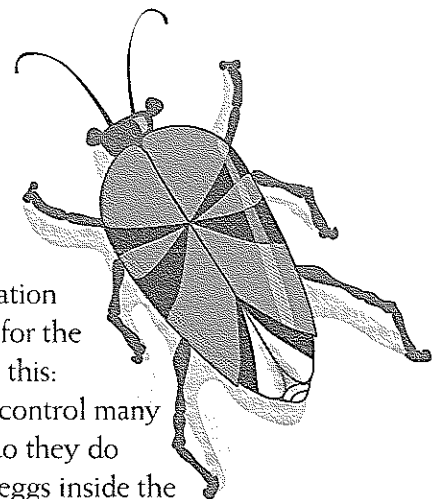
Good Bug! Bad Bug!

In our quest for the perfect yard or garden, we work hard to eradicate the insect pests we consider a threat to that perfection. However, ants, wasps, bees, ladybugs, spiders, and many other insects, even those we may traditionally consider pests, are beneficial for gardens and, in some cases, essential for certain plant species' continued survival.

Consider the lowly ant. More than 3,000 species of plants, including trillium, Dutchman's breeches, and yellow prairie violet, depend on ants to distribute their seed. And, while ants generally will not move seeds great distances, they can (and do) move lots of seeds. In fact, one European study showed that a nest of common

red wood ants dispersed nearly 40,000 seeds in a single summer. That's a lot of seeds!

What's your first inclination when you see a wasp? Run for the bug spray! But, think about this: Parasitic wasps are used to control many garden insect pests. How do they do this? Some wasps lay their eggs inside the eggs of their prey, while others use their prey larvae as egg hatcheries. Gruesome? Yes! Effective? You bet!



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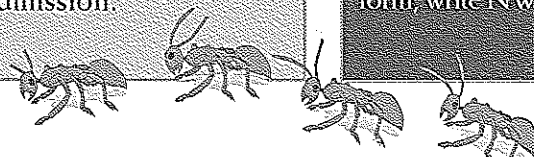
A picnicker's nightmare? No, it's one of the Big Bugs. This acclaimed traveling exhibit opens at the Wildflower Center June 7, and will remain through November 30. The 10-foot high, 25-foot long ant will be joined by a dragonfly, praying mantis, grasshopper, and a spider (with a wooden web!). The exhibit is yours to enjoy free with Wildflower Center admission.

Beneficial Bug Basics

Beneficial bugs are all around, and with a little work, you can lure these friendly fellows to your garden. Just follow these simple steps:

- 1) Provide a food source for the insects you wish to attract by planting regionally native plants that provide nectar and pollen. This way the good bugs already will be in your garden when the pests arrive. Lists of recommended native plant species for your region are available from the Wildflower Center's Clearinghouse. For a free order form, write NWRC, Clearinghouse,

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Director's Report: National Nativescapes

One of the most misunderstood terms in gardening today is the word Xeriscape. Coined by the Denver Water Department in the 80s, it comes from the Greek word *xeros*, meaning dry. Xeric is one of a series of ecological descriptors ecologists use to describe biogeographical regions around the world. The two other terms are *hydric* (wet) and *mesic* (moist; between dry and wet). Add the suffix "scape," meaning scene or view, to xeric, and you get Xeriscape, which refers to a land with drought-tolerant, hardy plants (though not necessarily native species).

Xeriscape is also one of the most mispronounced terms in gardening. Correctly pronounced ZEER-i-skap, the

word might bring images of dry regions of the world to a Greek scholar's mind, or the picture of a beautifully landscaped, drought-tolerant garden to a home gardener's mind. However, the common mispronunciation, *zeroscape*, says it all about the misconceptions regarding this gardening style –

"We encourage you to Nativescape."

zeroscape, as in nuthin' out there but some gravel in a circle around a cactus.

Natural xeric landscapes, found in dry zones of the world, are absolutely beautiful (imagine California, the Mediterranean, and South Africa). In

addition, dry land plants also can be astoundingly beautiful, showy, and colorful around homes and businesses. Many flowering annuals, perennials, trees, succulents, vines, grasses, and cacti are stunning in the often extremely harsh conditions of their native habitats. This is the essence of Xeriscaping.

The Wildflower Center's philosophy goes one step further. We encourage you to Nativescape. It's easier to pronounce

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The National Wildflower Research Center is a nonprofit research and educational organization committed to the preservation and reestablishment of native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, and vines in planned landscapes.

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NEWS! WILDFLOWER CENTER NEWS!

The Wildflower Center has received several grants that will enhance our education programming. The **Susan Vaughan Foundation** dedicated funds to underwrite the elementary school curriculum and teacher training program; grants from the **Coastal Bend Community Foundation** and the **Catto Charitable Foundation** will support all education programming, and **Dwight D. Sutherland** gave a grant to support the Center's national education and outreach programs.

Between January and May of this year, more than 30 national magazines profiled or mentioned the Center's annual *Wildflower Days Festival*, and many publications featured the Center in general. Highlights of this coverage include *Southern Living*, *House Beautiful*, *Country Decorator*, *Organic Gardening*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Family Circle*, *Birds and Blooms*, and *Texas Monthly*.

The Education Department's *Bird Brochure* is now available for both serious and casual birdwatchers. The 25-cent brochure features a list of common species you might see at the Wildflower Center, and is part of a continuing series of brochures funded by Rockwell Fund, Inc.

The Wildflower Center would like to thank the sponsors of the 1997 *Wildflower Days Festival*. Our corporate and media sponsors contribute greatly to the success of the Center's events. The official *Wildflower Days* sponsors were: American Airlines, Whole Foods Market, the *Austin American-Statesman*, etc. magazine, Southwest Airlines, 590 KLBJ RADIO, LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT Austin, Above & Beyond Travel, *New Texas* magazine, Omni Austin Hotel Southpark, HomeGate Studios & Suites, Schlotzsky's, Blue Bell Ice Cream, Papa John's Pizza, and Sierra Hinckley & Schmitt Water.

Good Bug! Bad Bug!

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These wasps can be used to control aphids, hornworms, cutworms, corn borers, and fruitworms, to name just a few.

Bees are perhaps nature's single most important pollinators. They depend on pollen and nectar as food sources, and many plants depend on bees to accomplish their pollination. Certain plant species, such as *Pedicularis* spp., rely exclusively on a particular species of bee for their pollination. Remove that bee and you eliminate the plant and all other organisms that depend on that plant for food and shelter. This is a perfect illustration of the complex interactions that exist in nature.

Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home.

But, make sure you stop at my garden first! Possessing a hard red shell with seven black spots (more or less), these members of the beetle family have an insatiable appetite for aphids, scale insects, potato beetles, and other plant damaging insects. Their only drawback . . . they have absolutely no sense of loyalty, and often can be found munching away on your neighbor's aphids while the aphids run amok in your garden.

Last, but certainly not least, the itty bitsy spider can be a potent ally in your garden. Not being very fussy about what they eat, spiders will attack anything that invades their territory. And, because spiders work best in preventing pest invasions rather than controlling them, you want to attract them to your garden before the pests arrive.

So, the next time you see a bug crawling on your favorite plant, stop and take a moment to consider. It might be on the prowl, searching for its lunch – a lunch that may be lurching on your garden!

F *From the* F E L D

New England

Millbrook, NY: *Spring Wildflower Identification*, May 18, *Wonderful Weeds: Knowing and Using the Common Plants of Your Schoolyard*, June 7, Contact: Institute for Ecosystem Studies, Box R (Route 44A), Millbrook, NY 12545, (914) 677-5359.

Mid-Atlantic

New Hope, PA: *Knowing Native Plants: Flowering Shrubs*, May 24, *Explore Wildflowers: Tannersville Cranberry Bog*, June 18, Contact: Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, Washington Crossing Historic Park, Box 685, New Hope, PA 18938, (215) 862-2924.

Millersville, PA: *Native Plants in the Landscape Conference*, June 12-14, Contact: Millersville Univ., Office of Continuing Ed., Box 1002, Millersville, PA 17551, (717) 872-3030.

Southeast

Linville, NC: *Wildflowers of the Carolina Mountains*, May 11, Contact: Grandfather Mountain, Box 129, Linville, NC 28646, (800) 468-7325.

Clemson, SC: *South Carolina Native Plant Symposium*, May 24, Contact: South Carolina Native Plant Society, Box 759, Pickens, SC 29671, (864) 868-7798.

Oklahoma/Texas

Duncan, OK: *20th Annual Wildflower Workshop*, May 9-10, Contact: Beautification Office, Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation, 200 NE 21st St., Oklahoma City, OK 73105, (405) 521-4037.

North Central/Midwest

Peoria, IL: *Backyard Habitat Fair*, May 25, Contact: Forest Park Nature Center, 5809 Forest Park Dr., Peoria, IL 61614, (309) 686-3360.

Northwest

Seattle, WA: *Using Native Plants to Attract Wildlife*, May 10, Contact: Center for Urban Horticulture, Univ. of Washington, Box 354115, Seattle, WA 98195, (206) 543-8616.

Kerby, OR: *First Conference on Siskiyou Ecology*, May 30-June 1, Contact: J. Beigel or B. Snitkin, Box 220, Cave Junction, OR 97523, (541) 592-4459.

For more native plant-themed events across North America, visit the *Native Plant Event Directory* at www.wildflower.org.

Bug Basics

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4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739.

2) Provide some shelter from wind and rain for your insects. A perennial border or a hedge of tall native species is great for this.

3) Water is essential to make your beneficial bugs feel at home. A small dish filled with water will do the trick.

4) Don't use toxic chemicals to kill bugs, diseases, or weeds. Regionally native plants rarely require supplemental chemicals, and these chemicals often kill the beneficial bugs that are already controlling your pests.

To know more about using beneficial bugs to control insect pests, consider these books (all available from *Wild Ideas: The Store*): *Natural Insect Control*, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (\$9.95); *Good Bugs for Your Garden*, Allison Mia Starcher (\$10.95); and *Dead Snails Leave No Trails*, Loren Nancarrow and Janet Hogan Taylor (\$11.95). To order these books, call (512) 292-4300. Remember, NWRC members take 10% off these prices!

National Nativescapes

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and spell, and it addresses a broader set of issues. Although a Xeriscaped garden contains drought-tolerant plants, they probably originate from all around the world. While these non-native species bring drought tolerance with them to their new home, they do not: bring their specific pollinators or the wildlife that depend on them for food and shelter, provide a sense of regional identity, or increase the natural biodiversity in a particular region. Plants native to your region *will* do all these things.

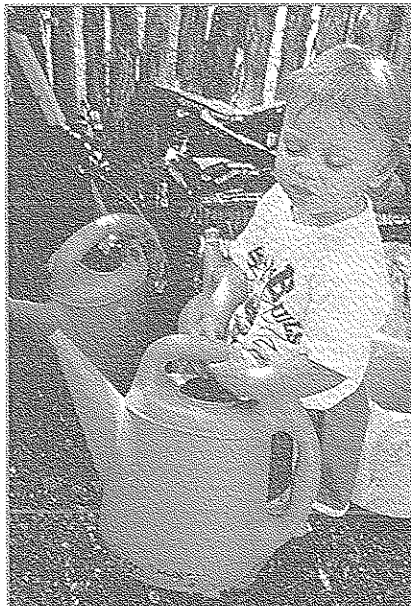
Regardless of where you live, your

region's gardening style, or your water regimen – whether you Xeriscape or "hydriscape" – Nativescaping is still for you! The Wildflower Center's Clearinghouse maintains recommended species lists for most regions of the country. You may request an order form by writing to NWRC, Clearinghouse, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739.

Replenish, enhance, and add harmony to your world with North American native plants. Grow a nativescape for all the benefits a stunning native garden can give the Earth.

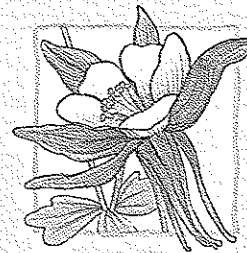
Mother's Day & Father's Day Memberships

Remember Mom or Dad with a Gift Membership to the Wildflower Center. Just call the Membership Office at (512) 292-4200, Monday - Friday, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (CT). We'll handle the rest, including a special letter letting them know of your thoughtful gift.



IT'S OFFICIAL!

The Wildflower Center's official web site is up and running. Be sure to place a bookmark at www.wildflower.org for the latest information about native plant-themed events



at the Wildflower Center and across North America (events we

don't have room to list in the newsletter's *From the Field* section - such as local native plant society meetings and special fieldtrips).

In addition, you can take a virtual tour of the Wildflower Center's facility, download directions to the Wildflower Center, find out about facility rental for meetings and parties, and link to other top native plant sites.

Keep checking – the site is growing by the month!



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- ✿ General Information, (512) 292-4100
- ✿ *Wild Ideas: The Store*, (512) 292-4300
- ✿ Membership, (512) 292-4200
- ✿ Official Web Site, www.wildflower.org



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Grow Native!

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