



In Good Company--Diversity in the Garden

Diversity in the garden is not only aesthetically pleasing but can lead to an overall healthier garden.

A variety of plants attract a variety of insects. Some insects that are referred to as pests cause damage to plants and are therefore undesirable in the garden. Other insects are beneficial to plants like those which aid in pollination and those that are natural enemies to insect pests in the garden. These natural enemies are often called beneficial insects.

Some beneficial insects are only a threat to a specific pest during certain stages of their life cycle. One example is the syrphid fly. Syrphids only feed upon their prey (including common garden pests such as aphids and mealy bugs) while in their larval stage. Adult syrphids don't eat other insects, they only eat nectar and pollen.

You should provide a variety of nectar and pollen sources in your garden so it can support beneficial insects during all their life stages.

Plant families that are known to attract and sustain beneficial insects include:

Apiaceae (Parsley Family)

Angelica (*Angelica*)
Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*)
Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*)
Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*)
Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*)
Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*)

Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
Calamint (*Calamintha*)
Coleus (*Solenostemon*)
Lavender (*Lavandula*)
Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
Garden Sage (*Salvia nemorosa*)
Thyme (*Thymus*)

Asteraceae (Daisy Family)

Aster (*Aster*)
Cone Flowers (*Echinacea*)
Dandelion (*Taraxacum*)
Marigolds (*Tagetes*)
Mums (*Chrysanthemum*)
Tickseed (*Coreopsis*)
Wormwood (*Artemisia*)

Brassicaceae (Cabbage Family)

Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)
Broccoli (*Brassica oleracea*)
Candytuft (*Iberis*)

Additional Resources

www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/your-garden/help-for-the-home-gardener/advice-tips-resources/pests-and-problems/other/beneficial-insects.aspx

www.sonoma.edu/preserves/education/edmaterials.shtml