

INSECTS

Yes, ants can now be killed with a liquid they take back to  their nests, and roaches kept at bay through borax in powdered sugar, and we definitely need to do away with the termites under the house, but do we really need to kill every bug in sight?

Doug Tallamy, in his book, Bringing Nature Home, gives another meaning to bugs, and they may be more necessary to the person trying to get the most out of his home, then some would have us believe. Trees are not usually thought of as having flowers and nectar, but they do. The top trees for insects, according to a survey cited (in order top down:) Oak, Black cherry, Willow, Birch, Poplar, Crabapple, Blueberry, Maple, Elm, Pine, and Hickory (<http://www.northcoastgardening.com/2010/02/native-plants-doug-tallamy/>.) Even though onion and garlic in water, sprayed on growing vegetables is known to get the bugs off crops, are we also getting rid of the predators? Poison would.

It's true that more bugs will reproduce in warmer climates, however, will that also be true for predators? Natural control is using the predators, parasites and diseases that are normally present to curb the populations of insect pests. Things like ladybugs, praying mantids, and aphid lions, (anti lions, doodlebugs, lacewings, etc.) feed on scale insects, thrips, aphids, mealybugs, moth eggs and caterpillars. To say nothing of spiders, not true insects, but they eat bugs, too. Good soil (or the best) over the years should give all these a chance to "do their thing."

Which brings up the subject of BEES. We like honey, too and when we noticed that bees coming to native shrubs, we added perennial native flowers for a bee garden: Coreopsis and Coreopsis tinctoria: best attracting cultivars seem to be varieties with wide, two-tone some buckwheat in the vegetable garden, Bee Balm or Monarda, yellow and red Gaillardia, some Bidens or tickseeds, Penstemon, Phacelia Grandiflora (hard to grow, but worth the and some slender sunflowers. Are these attracting bees? We don't know, but they're definitely attracting birds!



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flowers,
Asters,
effort.)

In the neighborhood, we saw many milkweeds, tall and short, disappear. So, milkweeds were planted, only to have the short ones, not only decimated, but stripped and killed entirely. We're looking now for a non-poisonous remedy, one that kills aphids or stem sucking insects, but not the caterpillars so important to butterflies. Spraying is out of the question

So, this has given us a different look at the bugs bugging us. Now we not only need trees, but what's your take on all this? Like they like to say, over phone lines, "Your opinion is valuable to us... ." Yours really is. Just push the SUBMIT button on the Home Page and let us know what your experiences have been with insects!