

Put A Little Green In Your Life

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Beneficial Bugs

By [Debbie Hadley](#), at About.com - A garden is a buggy place. Garden plants attract insect pests by the dozens, from aphids to slugs. But before you reach for an insecticide, take another look at the insects in your planting beds. While the pests are devouring your squash and tomatoes, another wave of insects is coming to the rescue. Beneficial insects prey on the pests gardeners detest, keeping insect populations in check. You should learn to recognize these top 10 beneficial insects in your garden.



Lady Beetles - Everyone loves a lady-bug, but gardeners hold them in especially high regard. Lady beetles eat aphids, scale insects, thrips, mealybugs, and mites – all the pests gardeners despise. With lady beetles, you get more bang for your buck, because both the adults and the larvae feed on pests. Lady beetle larvae look like tiny, colorful alligators. Learn to recognize them, so you don't mistake them for pests.

Praying Mantids - Praying mantids can handle even the largest pests in the garden. You need a good eye to spot one, because their coloration and shape provide them with perfect camouflage among the garden plants. When the nymphs hatch, they're so hungry they sometimes eat their siblings. In fact, praying mantids are generalist predators, meaning they're just as likely to eat a helpful lady beetle as they are to catch a caterpillar.



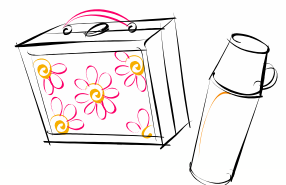
Back to School

As kids head back to school, remember to stay green with these environmentally friendly tips from Put a Little Green In Your Life!

Ride the bus! Instead of making special trip to drop the tots off at school, let your kids ride the bus.

Don't brown-bag it – lunchbox it! Use a lunchbox and try not to buy lots of pre-packaged convenience foods – those little wrappers sure add up to a lot of trash fast!

Don't overbuy on your school supplies. Check over what your kids didn't use up last year. Still have scissors? Paper? Pencils? Are those folders from last year still in good shape? Re-use them this year!



5 Interesting Facts

1. In 2008, the **United States consumed 99 Quadrillion Btus (British thermal units) of energy**, mostly in the form of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas, and oil. One Btu is equivalent to the energy released by burning one match. So, the United State's annual energy consumption adds up to a mind boggling 99,000,000,000,000,000 matches. That's 271 trillion each day, or roughly 1 million matches per person per day.

2. A governmental study calculated that the gasoline equivalent of the lifetime energy savings offered by using a single 24 watt compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) in lieu of a 100 watt incandescent bulb would be **sufficient to drive a Toyota Prius from San Francisco to New York**. Replacing that 100 Watt bulb with a CFL will prevent the release of 800 pounds of carbon dioxide over the CFL's operating life.



3. According to the American Solar Energy Society, **the amount of sunlight that falls on the Earth's surface in one minute is sufficient to meet world energy demand for an entire year.**

4. Manufacturing cell phones, computers, and other consumer electronics require a lot of energy. In fact, 81% of the life-cycle energy costs associated with a single computer is from its manufacture, only 19% from its operation. In other words, **the computer you're using right now, in all the years you'll own it, will never consume more energy than was required to create it.** The production of a single computer also uses 42,000 gallons of water. Please recycle your used electronics and turn them off when not in use.

5. If the entire population of the United States washed their clothes exclusively with cold water (instead of hot), we would save **\$3 billion in energy costs annually and cut national CO2 emissions by over a full percent!**

For 10 more interesting facts, [visit this website](#).

Compost Tea? What in the world is compost tea? Compost tea is easily made by soaking or steeping compost in water. The resulting compost tea is used for either a foliar application (sprayed on the leaves) or applied to the soil. Everyone knows that compost is a wonderful addition to soil and helps our gardens grow better. You and your garden plants can benefit even more by using compost tea. By using compost tea to replace chemical-based fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides, you can garden safer and be more protective of the environment.

In our personal garden last year, we conducted an experiment, spraying some plants with a home brew of microbe-rich aerated compost tea (made by constantly churning and infusing oxygen into a mixture of compost and water using a small aquarium pump) and not spraying others. The plants we used compost tea on grew larger, produced more vegetables, and just generally looked healthier than those that didn't get a daily drink of tea.

[Learn how to make your own compost tea.](#)

