

Warning, some photos may cause Creepy Crawlies or Heeby Jeebies

This Month's MVB is ... The Seven Spotted Lady Beetle, *Coccinella septempunctata*



Introduced to Canada as a biological control for aphids, they are actually European. When first introduced they became naturalized in North America while declining in Europe. A naturalized species is one that has migrated naturally or manually by human interference and has blended with the new environment and improves the new ecosystem they reside in.

The Seven Spotted Lady Beetle or Lady Bird Beetle is known for its vibrant scarlet shell covered with seven black spots. Each wing has three black spots and one larger black spot that covers the base of both wing caps, sometimes resembling a heart, with two smaller white dots just underneath. Their heads also have two larger white spots that can resemble eyes. The size of the black spots can vary slightly but the number and placement is always the same. Their body has an adorably rounded oval shape, maxing out at around 8.6mm in length they are considered to be on the larger side for a beetle.

Not to be confused with the highly invasive Asian Lady Beetle, who was also brought in as a natural control for aphids. You can tell the difference between the two quite easily, one key characteristic is that the Asian Lady Beetle has a distinctive "M" on the head and can be many different shades of orange to red. With any number of black spots. A Seven Spotted Lady Beetle will only ever have seven black spots and two white spots on the wings and head.



Seven Spotted Lady Beetle



Asian Lady Beetle

The Asian Beetle is considered to be one of the most invasive species ever recorded, these are the “Lady Bugs” you find in your home. They are much more aggressive than The Seven Spotted Lady Beetle and will bite you when they feel threatened potentially causing allergic reactions, and even asthma-like symptoms when large colonies are present. Asian Lady Beetles can overwinter in your house and damage not only your home but your pets and yourself. While they were also introduced to control aphids the Asian Lady Beetle will also eat plants, oftentimes causing great amounts of damage to roses, corn and soy. Unlike the Seven Spotted Lady Beetle who is strictly a predator not an omnivore.

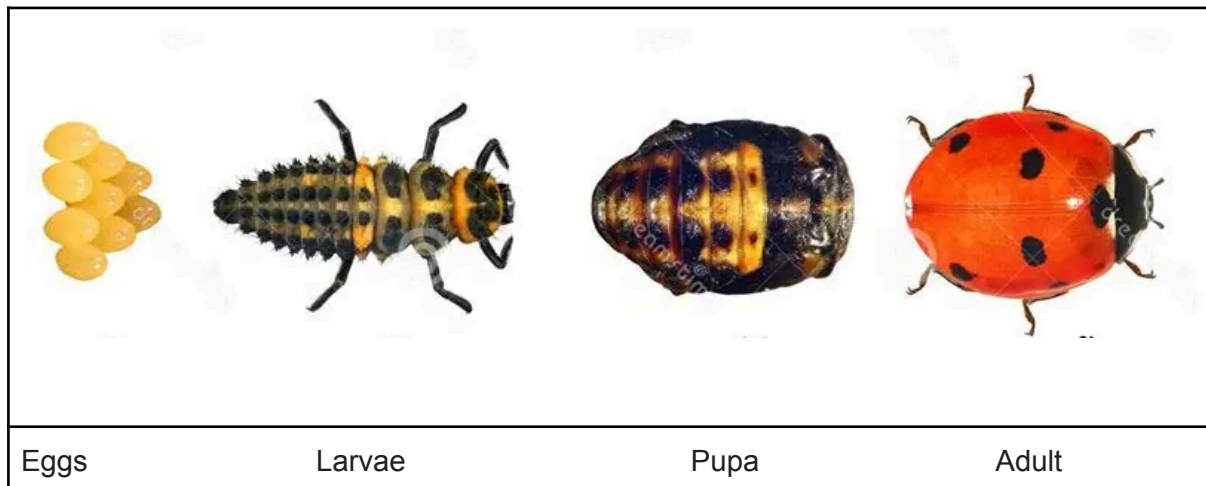
Seven Spotted Lady Beetles can be found in many different habitats including meadows, gardens, and even forests. They are habitat generalists and often remain on the move following large populations of prey to feast on.

They are an excellent pest control species, as predatory beetles they consume large amounts of prey insects that can damage plants. One adult can eat hundreds of aphids in a day as well as other pest insects as they are generalists when it comes to diet, they will eat whatever small insect is closest.

We have even found a few clusters of eggs in our retail greenhouse! And I have personally seen a handful of adult Seven Spotted Lady Beetles in the yard on our entrance planters.



Eggs will be deposited in clusters on the underside of plant leaves and do not prefer any one plant over another for laying eggs on, the only rule being that an aphid colony or other prey are nearby for when the young hatch. The larvae are dark grey/black with orange spots along their bodies. Like adult Lady Beetles they are avid aphid eaters.



From larvae they pupate, this is a period of development that rearranges the body's characteristics and allows the lady bug to safely mature into an adult beetle. When they emerge from the pupa they can reproduce immediately.

During the winter they will overwinter in clusters near feeding sites, this can be anywhere including under rocks, under or within dead leaves, in cracks on trees or shrubs, often preferring raised sites. Unlike the Asian Lady Beetle who will overwinter in colonies within houses and other buildings.

They can live anywhere from several weeks to several months depending on climate and weather. This life span includes all stages of life, not only adults. As usual, the number of generations depends on temperature, cooler climates have fewer generations and warmer ones can have multiple.

Although the Seven Spotted Lady Beetle has reduced in population, there actually isn't much we can do for them other than to try and provide some shelter spots for them overwinter in. Since they are predatory we can't really improve their food sources. Unless you wish to purchase aphid susceptible plants to attract prey, some annuals are sold as bait/sacrifices to attract aphids away from other plants, the most common one being Nasturtiums. You could also purchase batches of live Lady Beetles to release in your yard from various retailers to help boost their numbers, although I should tell you that it is very difficult to keep the Lady Beetles near as they travel to follow their prey, this option is up to the individual as it could become costly over time.

At Maries West River Greenhouses we all appreciate our local beneficials and believe they are ultimately the best form of natural insect control in the garden but we are not experts on the subject. The purpose of these posts is to raise awareness to the fact that not all insects are harmful and we should keep that in mind when applying insecticides for pest control.

Sources:

[13 Types of Ladybugs Found In Canada! \(ID GUIDE\) - Bird Watching HQ](#)

[Seven-Spot Ladybird: Identification, Life Cycle, Damage, FAQs](#)

https://media.zenfs.com/en/parade_home_garden_articles_141/d49a3eae46f344b01e44262f64fd8ed3

<https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/seven-spot-ladybird-ladybug-coccinella-septempunctata-asian-ladybird-ladybug-harmonia-axyridis-seven-spot-ladybird-ladybug-248749908.jpg>

[What Damage Do Asian Lady Beetles Cause](#)