

Green Lacewing

Product Guide

The lacewing larva, sometimes called the “aphid lion” is one of the most effective general predator known. The common green lacewing adult actually does not kill other insects but feeds on sweet nectar and pollen. It is her offspring that do all the work. Similar in appearance to an alligator with pinchers like ice tongs, the aphid lion vigorously attacks its prey, injects paralyzing venom, and draws out the body fluids. It feeds on a wide variety of soft-bodied insects and pest eggs including aphids, mealybugs, cottony cushion scale, insect eggs, mites, thrips, red spider mites, moth eggs, and small caterpillars. The tiny, less than 1/16”, greyish-brown larvae move continually over the plant in search of food, sucking the body fluids of their prey. Each lacewing larva will devour 200 or more pests or pest eggs a week, but will not harm humans or animals. For maximum results you will want the lacewing adults to mate and lay eggs in close vicinity of the pest area. In order for this to happen the adults need to be able to feed on nectar, pollen or honeydew to stimulate egg-laying. If these conditions do not exist they will simply leave the area and attempt to find the right conditions elsewhere. Cover Crops such as clovers and alfalfa are good habitats. Reproduction can be maximized by providing an additional food source, such as PVFS Good Bug Food. (PBE 956)

Biology

After two to three weeks the larvae will pupae by spinning a cocoon with silken thread. The adult lacewing emerges in about 5 days completing the life cycle. The female lacewing lays her eggs on foliage, each on the top of hairline filaments. Newly hatched

larvae are very tiny and you might have difficulty seeing them. The adult life span is four to six weeks. Mating takes place on the day of emergence from the pupal stage, and egg-laying may occur the next day. Females generally deposit an average of 100-200 eggs on the plant foliage. The lacewing’s life cycle is greatly influenced by climatic conditions. Lacewing adults over-winter in protected places, but have difficulty surviving cold winters.

Release Instructions

*If you would like to observe the larvae, or check the contents of your bottle before release, sprinkle some of the contents onto a piece of white paper. You will see larvae crawling amongst the rice hulls.

Release the eggs when several larvae can be seen moving around in the container. They may be emerging upon arrival. If not, you may have to keep the container(s) warm (75°F-80°F) for a day or so in order for the eggs to start hatching. Lacewing eggs are normally shipped in a carrier. This combination provides separation and a means of distributing the eggs at places where the pest infestation occurs.

Do not wait too long: the lacewing larvae are cannibalistic and eventually they will start attacking each other!

The larvae are shipped two different ways:

1. Hexcel: pre-fed lacewing larvae are still developing inside individual cells also known as a “rearing frame” covered on both sides with organdy material. You can observe the larvae in the cells if you hold the frame into the light.

The larvae should be released the same day received (no later than the following day) unless otherwise stated on your packing slip. Peel back one side of the organdy

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material an inch at a time and “knock” or “tap” the larvae out onto the target area.

2. Bottle: lacewing eggs are incubated at the insectary and upon arrival will have hatched into larvae. They are mixed with rice hulls for easy distribution and should be released the same day received. Simply sprinkle the contents over the target area. The larvae will feed for approximately 10 to 14 days (depending on climatic conditions and available food source) and then pupate. You may wish to introduce more larvae at that time.

To release the lacewing, you can simply sprinkle the contents of the container over the area where the pest insects are known to be or suspected. But go easy; don't sprinkle the complete contents in one spot. You may want to put the contents in a larger container with additional carrier to get better coverage. Anything that does not harm the larvae and that can be distributed easily enough can be used: wheat bran, vermiculite, fine saw-dust etc.

For maximum results you will want the lacewing adults to mate and lay eggs in close vicinity of the pest area. In order for this to happen the adults need to be able to feed on nectar, pollen or honeydew to stimulate egg-laying. If these conditions do not exist they will simply leave the area and attempt to find the right conditions elsewhere.

If infestation is heavy, a fresh supply of eggs two weeks after the initial release may help overall control. Do not cold store the larvae. Hold at a moderately humid 65°-75°F until ready to release.