



A frog sits on the patio rug.



A King snake keeps the voles, moles, rats, and rattlers away.



Ladybugs in various stages on barley stems.

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Frogs and Toads:

Natural pest control. They eat caterpillars, cutworms, bugs, beetles, grubs, slugs, grasshoppers, and numerous other detrimental insects.

Invite frogs and toads to your landscape by offering:

- A place to hide. Frogs and toads are shy. They prefer a cool, shaded area with lots of moisture and plants. Turn over a flowerpot and they will make a house.
- A pond allows them to lay eggs. Have fun watching tadpoles.

Lizards:

Reptiles are excellent eaters of garden pests including slugs and harmful insects.

A plethora of lizards living in your landscape is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. The food you grow will be free of heavy metals and pesticides since lizards cannot thrive in a hazardous environment.

Invite lizards to your landscape by offering:

- Only natural methods of pest control.
- Avoidance of all weed killers.
- Mulch to regulate moisture in the soil.
- Rocks, bricks, or stones for sunbathing.
- A saucer or small container with water for drinking.

Snakes:

Garter snakes and kingsnakes are especially beneficial in our area because they eat insects and rodents. One snake can devour an entire rat

family in two weeks. Kingsnakes also kill rattlesnakes and keep them away. Make sure to learn the good snakes from the poisonous ones.

Invite snakes to your landscape by offering:

- A hiding place in bushes, tree stumps, driftwood, or even metal panels.
- A water source on the ground, a small birdbath, fountain, or the “butterfly bowl”.

Ladybugs:

Also known as Lady beetles or Ladybird beetles, their larvae look like alligators. Both the adults and larvae are voracious general pest predators of aphids, beetles, caterpillars, lace bugs, mealybugs, mites, scale, whiteflies, and insect eggs. The larvae consume over 40 aphids per hour and an adult ladybug will consume over 5,000 aphids in a lifetime. If you have a small garden or a minimal pest population in a large garden, they will fly away. Rejoice because your garden is organically balanced.

Invite ladybugs to your landscape by offering:

- A wide range of flowering plants to attract and keep them on site.

Hoverflies:

Also known as syrphid flies or flower flies, hoverflies earned their name by hovering over flowers to sip the nectar, much like hummingbirds. They look similar to bees but they do not sting and are not harmful to humans. The adults are primarily pollinators and the larvae are pest predators, crawling along plant surfaces searching for prey. They seize the insect, suck out its contents, and discard the skin. They mimic bees and wasps to protect themselves from predators but have two wings instead of four.

Invite hoverflies to your landscape by offering:

- A variety of nectar and pollen-producing plants such as aster, calendula, cornflower, cosmos, dill, fennel, lavender marigolds, mint, statice, zinnia, wild mustard, and sunflowers.
- Food throughout every season by timing plantings for continuous blooms.

Spiders:

Spiders help maintain a healthy balance in your garden by eating harmful pests from spring through winter. By controlling the bad insects, they reduce plant pathogens that damage plant tissues. Most spiders are peaceful. The most common web builder is the yellow and black spider, and the black wolf spiders are active hunters.

Invite spiders to your landscape by offering:

- Grass clippings, mulch, lush bushes, and perennials for habitat.
- Cover crops such as clover and vetch and hedges like boxwoods are havens for spiders.
- Sunflowers, vining beans, and corn as well as other tall flowers are excellent for webs.

Grow a diversity of plants, eliminate pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides to attract beneficial insects, birds, spiders, reptiles, and numerous other guardians of our garden galaxy. By providing the basic needs of food, habitat, water, and shelter, you and your family will enjoy increased outdoor amusement while learning an appreciation of nature. Your garden will be their dinner table and their bedroom. Know your friends and protect them.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.