

GREEN LACEWINGS

Green Lacewings (*Chrysoperla carnea*) are predators of many species of pest insects and mites. These attractive pale green insects are an effective natural enemy of aphids, mites, whiteflies, mealbugs, leafhoppers, thrips, all types of moth and butterfly eggs, and caterpillars.

Life Cycle:

Lacewing adults are ½ to ¾ inch long. They have transparent, pale green wings and bright metallic gold eyes (they are also known as “Golden Eyes”). They have a characteristic fluttering flight, and sometimes rise from the plants when disturbed, especially at twilight. Adult Lacewings are not themselves predaceous, but feed on honeydew, nectar and pollen. They lay tiny pale green eggs on hair like stalks attached to the underside of leaves or on bark of trees. In several days the Lacewing larvae hatch from these eggs.

The larvae, which are active searchers, will immediately begin moving over the plant in search of food. These larvae are grayish-brown in color, and 3/8 inch long, and have pincher-shaped jaws which they use to seize their prey and suck the juices from its body. Because they are such voracious aphid eaters (consuming as many as 1,000 aphids each per day), they are called “Aphid Lions”. They also devour a great variety of citrus mealbugs, cottony-cushion scale, and the eggs of many caterpillars.

Maturing after two to three weeks, the Lacewing larvae spin a small cocoon of silken thread. The adult Lacewing emerges five days later by neatly cutting a round, hinged lid at the top of the cocoon. The cycle then repeats itself.

The life cycle of Lacewings is directly influenced by climatic conditions. Under summer conditions a complete life cycle can occur within a month, thus many generations can occur each year. Lacewings over winter as adults, but with difficulty; they should be recolonized each spring.

Do not feel discouraged because you have difficulty locating the Lacewings once they are released. The larvae are very secretive and do most of their foraging at night when water is available.

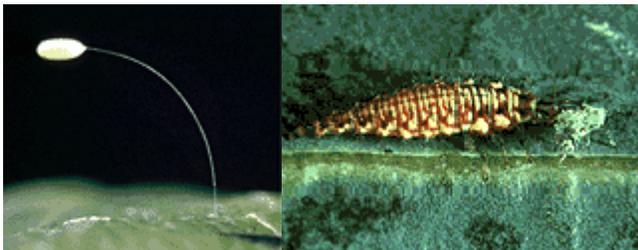
Directions:

The Lacewing are shipped to you as eggs, and will probably be hatching or very close to hatching by the time you receive them. We mix the Lacewing eggs with rice hulls and moth eggs for food. The rice hulls serve two functions: first, when the Lacewing hatch, they are very hungry! (In fact, they are so hungry that they often resort to cannibalism if there is no other food source available). The rice hulls provide separation so they are not as apt to eat each other. The second reason is that since they are so small, it is easier to distribute them if they are in a carrier to give you more volume to work with. A thimble would hold about 10,000 lacewing eggs!

Sprinkle them around your plants. If you are putting them in trees, you can place small amounts in paper drinking cups and staple them to the leaves. The Lacewing will crawl out and up into the tree or plant. The larvae will feed for about 3 weeks, then they will roll up into a little white pupae and emerge as an adult in about 1 week ready to lay eggs! When looking for the newly hatched lacewing larvae, remember that they are quite small, about the size of the pale green or gray egg from which they came, so you may have difficulty seeing them.

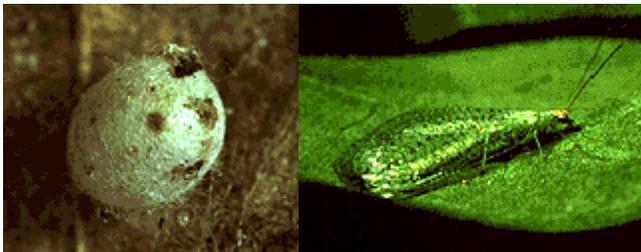
Recommendations:

WATER WASHING: In the event your plants are already heavily infested with aphids or other harmful insects, it is advisable to “water wash” your plants first. This involves spraying the plants with water, thus knocking the insects to the ground. The Lacewing larvae will establish themselves more quickly and prevent further reinfestations.



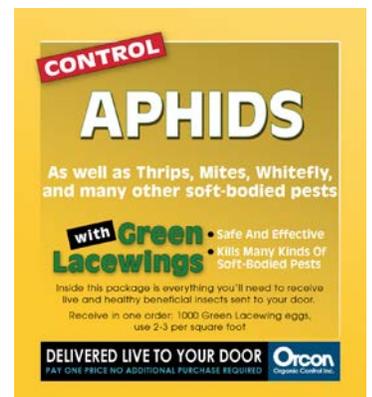
Green lacewing egg (left).

Larva eating aphid (right).



Green lacewing pupa (left).

Adult green lacewing (right).



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