



BEESTON WILDLIFE GROUP

Guide to Ladybirds

People like ladybirds, probably because they are brightly coloured and look interesting.

They are beetles with striking wing case covers (Elytra).

There are 47 species in Britain. You can't 'age' or determine the species by counting the spots! They vary, even between species. Twenty seven species are brightly coloured, twenty are dull brown. There are common ones that you can identify with a bit of practice and they can be seen all year round, although in the winter months they go into a torpid state and hide, but will wake up and feed if it warms up.

They are like butterflies in that they have a four stage life cycle: Egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and adult beetle.

Many eat aphids as the caterpillar and adult stages, so are welcomed in the garden. In fact when a plant is being attacked by aphids, the plant sends out a chemical signal that attracts ladybirds to come and 'help'.

Below are seven common species, when you next come across a ladybird, why not try and identify it?

7 Spot: The commonest ladybird. Three spots on each wing and one in the middle:



Harlequin: A big ladybird with many different forms. All have pale brown legs. (7 Spot has black):



2 Spot: A small ladybird, one spot on each wing, there are different forms, but always small:



22 Spot: A yellow ladybird with round black spots, eats mildew on leaf surfaces (Compare to 14 Spot):



14 Spot: Has a Clowns smiley face, with square spots. (Compare to the 22 Spot):



16 Spot: A ladybird that has a line of spots joined around the rim, and a black line down the middle:



24 Spot: A dull red, hairy ladybird with many spots, a red head (other species black), eats vegetation:



Egg:



Caterpillar:



Chrysalis:



If you come across a ladybird or any insect you would like identifying, take a photo on your phone and send it to us at info@beestonwildlifegroup.org. We love a challenge!