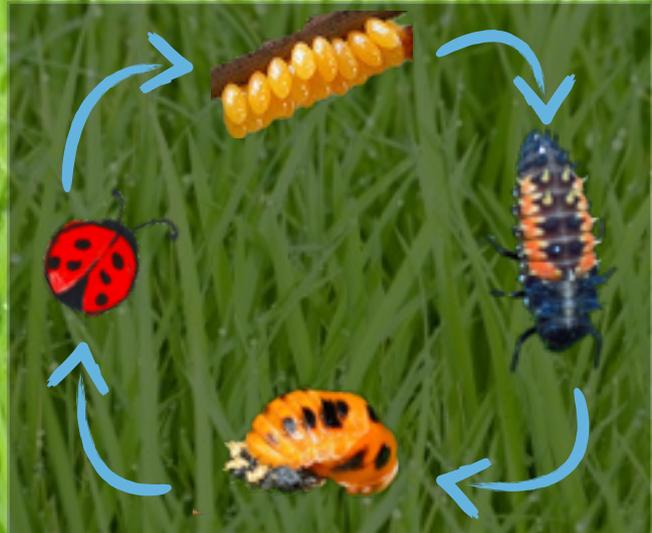




The Ladybird Story

Ladybirds are amazing little creatures. These small, colourful bugs play an important role in making sure that we can grow enough and healthy food. In short, they eat the bad bugs. They prey on aphids (plant lice) and other insects that damage crops and plants – a farmer's friend!

The ladybird lifecycle starts with an egg, which then hatches to become a larva, which later evolves into a pupa and then finally the adult ladybird emerges – ready to lay new eggs and start the cycle again.



Unfortunately there are two threats to ladybird populations world wide – including in South Africa.

The one threat is the introduction of an invasive species of ladybird from Asia, known as the Harlequin Ladybird.

Harlequin Ladybird



Look for the M



They eat the larvae and food of our local ladybirds

—Ladybird images courtesy of Jessica Allen—



We can help ladybirds by starting to address one other problem

INSECTICIDES

Through spraying less, using safer insecticides and planting plants that will attract ladybirds to our gardens, we can help to create ladybird safe-spaces in our gardens.

Ladybirds are attracted to plants such as:
hibiscus, roses, sunflowers, fennel, dill, cosmos, dandelion and butterfly weed.

These plants typically attract aphids as well – the food source for ladybirds.

In order to reduce the need for spraying insecticides near these plants, one can also plant flowers and plants that discourage aphid infestation. Such plants include

garlic, chives, mint and petunias.

Ask your parents or teacher about starting a ladybird-friendly garden today.



Did You Know?

- ★ While we know ladybirds as red or orange insects with black spots, some species of ladybird don't have spots at all – some are just black!
- ★ Ladybirds can eat many times their own weight in aphids each day!
- ★ Ladybirds can lay hundreds of eggs at a time.
- ★ Ladybirds can play an important role in food security.
- ★ Some people believe that ladybirds bring good luck.
- ★ Ladybirds are also known as “ladybugs” or “lady-beetles” in other parts of the world.

Questions:

1. When was the last time you saw a ladybird?
2. When was the last time your mother, father, grandparents, uncle, aunt or teacher saw a ladybird?
3. What will you do to help create ladybird safe spaces?
4. How many people will you tell about ladybirds?



See if you can help the lost ladybird find her friend!



Can you count all the Ladybirds below?

