

Weekly Column for Week of 10-26-09  
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## Lady Beetles All Around

This fall season has brought Asian lady beetles in record numbers for some areas. It may appear as quite a shock to see so many at one time. Perhaps they are even on the side of a house wall, by the hundreds - or more. It is a known fact that lady beetles help to eat many other insects that are harmful to plants. They are a welcomed site in the yard because they offer free pest control as predators of insects, such as aphids, that feed on a variety of plants. It is for this reason that lady beetles are viewed as the "good bugs" in the yard.

Seeing a massive number of Asian lady beetles all at once, huddled up together can be an amazing site to see. It can also be a little overwhelming. So, why would they be in such large numbers on the side of a house or building? Well, it is that time of the season when the lady beetles are looking for a place to hibernate for the winter. They are naturally drawn to the warmth that is being emitted from the house. They are also attracted to contrasts in color such as a light colored house with dark shutters. Homes that are near a wooded area are also more likely to have lady beetles on or around them.

Lady beetles can get into homes and garages before they go into their hibernation mode. Because they hardly move around at this point, they may even go unnoticed for the several months they spend inside the home. This is because they will most likely be in corners and cracks where they are not easily seen. It is not until late winter or early spring when the lady beetles become active again that some homeowners will realize that they did not disappear at all. In other words, around mid to late October, massive amounts of Asian lady beetles are seen as they respond to the changing weather. All of a sudden, they are gone. Then, as the seasons change again in preparation for spring, the lady beetles reappear in just as many numbers as they in the fall.

To avoid the Asian lady beetle getting into the house, all cracks and openings should be tightly sealed and monitored. Plugging any gaps or spaces and repairing window screens can prove very effective against lady beetle entry. If lady beetles are found in the house, they can be swept or vacuumed up. The good news is that lady beetles do not cause any damage to the home, besides being a nuisance if they are in a great number that can add up to the thousands. They also will not infest stored food or destroy furniture. They can, however, get up in attics or crawl spaces, so these areas should also be monitored.

For more information on Asian lady beetles, you can visit the web at <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-214.pdf>.

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