



CARE INFO

Ladybugs



Did you know that the ladybug is a beetle?

Getting Started

- Your ladybugs are *Hippodamia convergens* species.
- Remove ladybugs from their shipping box. Place container in refrigerator over the weekend until you are ready to observe them in your classroom.

Habitat

- You will want to transfer the ladybugs while they are still cold and moving slowly.
- **Materials:** (1) three or four large, clear jars or other suitable containers, (2) an old stocking or dish towel, (3) rubber bands, (4) twigs and leaves.
- Cut pieces of cloth large enough to cover jar openings. Put leaves and twigs in jars. Sprinkle leaves very lightly with water. Do not allow water to collect in the bottom.
- Pour ladybugs into jars, dividing them into equal amounts. Place stocking or cloth over openings and secure with rubber bands.
- Observe ladybugs for 3 to 5 days.
- Release ladybugs outdoors after no more than 5 days in the classroom. They'll be hungry and will need to search for food.

Release

- Release on a warm day in a shady place near trees, shrubs or bushes. Rose bushes are excellent ladybug habitat. Be prepared: bugs will crawl up your arms and into your clothing!
- Pour into students' hands. Blow on ladybugs to make them fly away or scoot them one at a time onto a fingertip and brush them off onto a leaf or tree trunk.

Observation

- **Materials:** (1) ladybugs, (2) pencils and crayons or markers, (3) paper, (4) magnifying glass.
- **Look at body parts:** head, thorax, abdomen, pronotum (a plate on the upper thorax), 6 legs, 2 antenna, 2 wing covers, 2 wings. Turn a ladybug upside down to see its thorax and abdomen.
- **Look at behavior:** crawling, hiding, raising and lowering wing covers.
- **Compare:** Wrap one jar in a dark towel or put it in a closet for a day. Then bring it into the light and compare it with another jar. Is anything different?
- **Experiment:** Ladybugs are carnivores; they eat aphids, whiteflies, other tiny insects and insect eggs. Are your ladybugs hungry enough to try something different? Cut several raisins in half and drop some in each jar. (The sweet syrup in a raisin is a little bit like aphids' sugary secretions.)
- **Write:** What kind of animal are they (insect, beetle)? What do they look like? What are their body parts? What is their habitat like? What are they doing? What do you think they eat (aphids mostly, and other small insects). Why do they like them?