



Ladybird Snapshot



Ladybirds are an important and much-loved part of garden insect populations. They vary more than in just colour though, covering a range of ecological niches: some are exclusively predatory, some are omnivorous, and some even eat mildew.

Different ladybird species can compete within a habitat for space and resources (and even directly via predation). Since gardens can contain many different small habitat patches, we are interested to see if there are differences in diversity (how many species) or abundance (total counted numbers) of ladybirds between these habitats.

Ladybirds are conspicuous and fairly easy to identify – ideal for a Snapshot project!

What to do

We are going to **find, count** and **identify** ladybirds in different garden habitats.

Counts should be approximately 10 minutes long and done on a sunny day. Try and survey a similar sized area of each habitat. Look over the plants first, seeing if you can spot any brightly-coloured ladybirds. Check underneath leaves and where stems branch. Colonies of aphids are a tempting meal for adults and larvae, so look closely at any clusters of black/greenfly.

Record and **identify** any ladybirds you find, adults or larvae. Take photographs if you can, as these are very useful to confirm the identification.

You will need to do counts in at least **two** of the following garden habitats:

- 1) An area primarily used for growing **vegetables / fruits**.
- 2) An area primarily used for growing **flowers**. This can be a typical flowerbed, or a wilder area; mostly it should not be used for crops.
- 3) An area of **shrubs / bushes**. (*Optional*)

That's it! You can use the recording sheet provided to record your snapshot findings – or whatever method works best for you. Send records back to the Buzz Club via buzzclub@sussex.ac.uk; or use the online recording form we provide.

You can repeat this Snapshot as often as you like!

Identifying Ladybirds

Ladybirds are a fairly easy insect group to identify (plus they don't move as fast as a lot of other insects), but don't worry if you haven't done much insect ID – there are great guides out there. If you can take **photos**, we can help you pin that ID down.

Two really good free resources for identification are from the UK Ladybird Survey:

- For adult ladybirds: [https://www.coleoptera.org.uk/sites/default/files/Ladybirds of the UK new 2019.pdf](https://www.coleoptera.org.uk/sites/default/files/Ladybirds%20of%20the%20UK%20new%202019.pdf)
- For ladybird larvae: [https://www.coleoptera.org.uk/sites/default/files/ladybird larvae.pdf](https://www.coleoptera.org.uk/sites/default/files/ladybird_larvae.pdf)

Some ladybirds have common alternative colour patterns (e.g. melanic forms). The non-native (and *very* common) 'Harlequin' or Asian Ladybird is *extremely* variable in its adult patterns. Once again the UK Ladybird Survey has a good guide to these ladybirds in particular:

- <https://www.coleoptera.org.uk/coccinellidae/how-recognise-harlequin-ladybird>

The Harlequin is so widespread now in the UK it's likely you will find some of these (although they are less common in Scotland). While they are an invasive species, it is not advisable to try and kill them as they are too well established.

The UK Ladybird Survey



UK
Ladybird Survey

The UK Ladybird Survey is a long-running citizen science survey for ladybirds all across the UK. They produce updates and atlases of UK ladybird populations and trends, and are an all-round fantastic part of the study of ladybirds. Ladybird records can be submitted to the Survey via [iRecord](#).

This **Ladybird Snapshot** project is being run by the Buzz Club and is not affiliated with UKLS, since we are investigating the abundance / diversity of ladybirds specifically *within* garden-scale habitats. 'Gardens' are grouped in with 'arable land' and 'parks' as a UK-scale habitat category in iRecord – which is not a narrow enough category for the questions we want to investigate.

Please note that we do not have an easy way to send bulk project data from the Buzz Club over to iRecord. However, data collected for the Snapshot can be easily submitted by the *participant* to iRecord as well as us. It won't duplicate the record.

If you can, please can you also submit your ladybird records to iRecord via: <https://irecord.org.uk/enter-ladybird-records>

