

Beetles, Wasps and Flies

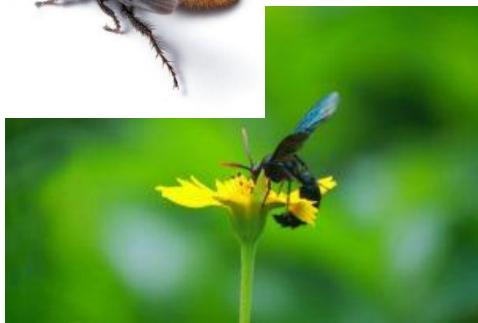


Beetles are the most diverse of the insect groups and also the most ancient. It is not surprising that some beetles that depend on pollen for nutrition select the also ancient Magnolias and Pond lilies as their preferred source. The beetles actually chew the flowers not very neatly and consequently acquire pollen to transport to the next flower. The varieties of beetles that are pollinators include Jewel beetles, Soldier beetles, Long-horned beetles, Blister beetles and many more. In addition to the large white to green bowl shaped flowers like pond lilies, beetles are commonly found on

small clustered flowers like Spirea and Goldenrod.



Wasps and hornets do double duty for gardens—they pollinate plants and manage pests. The pictured half inch long Blue-winged wasp feeds on nectar but the females hunt for June and Japanese beetle grubs to feed to their developing young. The more familiar Eastern yellow jacket is also a pollinator and considered beneficial for its pest destroying capabilities. Be sure to note



the narrow waist of the wasps as compared bees though they use their powerful sting only when threatened. In this year of the cicada, it is also wise to be on the lookout for the Cicada killer wasps. As large as one and a half inches long, these wasps resemble a yellow jacket with yellow and black striped abdomens. In addition to harvesting cicadas to



feed their larvae, the Cicada killer, feeds on nectar and acts as a pollinator.



Hoverflies are premier pollinators in our fruit orchards. They are responsible for pollinating apples, pears, cherries, plums, apricots, peaches and berries including raspberries. Beside that, forty per cent of the species provide pest control services as their larvae feed on other insects. They have been



recommended to protect your cabbages from the destruction of Cabbage white caterpillars (see Pollinator of the Day—Thursday) as well as aphids and thrips. Plant some chives, alyssum, thyme, parsley and lavender to attract these exterminators and eliminate the need for pesticides. Pollinating flies are often similar to bees and wasps in coloration but they only have two wings. Flies are especially active pollinators in spring before other pollinators appear. They are attracted to putrid smelling

flowers like Skunk cabbage and the beautiful Trillium. This attraction can backfire as the carnivorous Pitcher plant of the southern Jersey bogs uses the scent to attract and trap its prey.