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Adding Artful Beauty and Value to your Outdoor Spaces



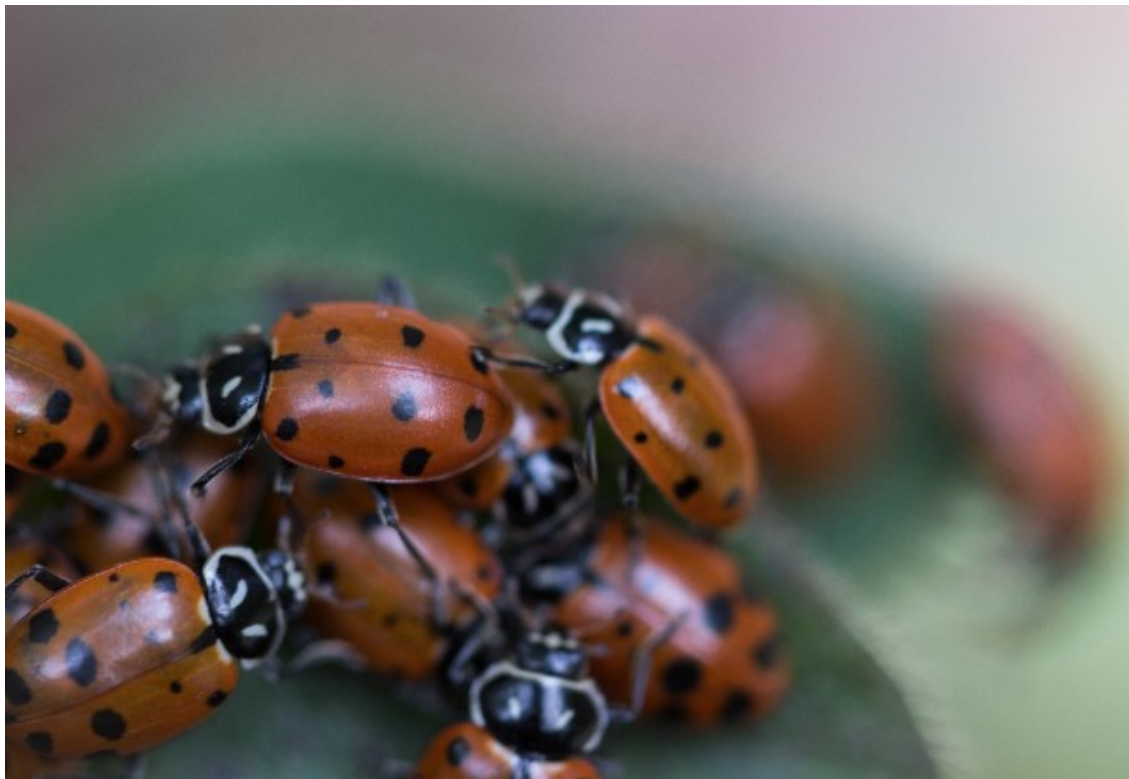
Around The Garden Newsletter

Hello garden enthusiasts!

This past weekend, I joined a group of local photographers on the hunt for an amazing site; a Ladybug migration. Nestled in the misty beauty of the Oakland Redwood National Park, this annual gathering of millions of the little polka dotted beauties is a site to see.

Each year at this time ladybugs, or technically lady beetles, settle in for the winter in mild hibernation, moving slowly and rarely eating as they wait for temperatures to warm up. Our group of shutter bugs mixed with passing hikers clamored around the heavily trafficked area in wonder. It almost looked like the forest floor was moving!

Here are a few shots I took on this special day.





Speaking of ladybugs, I thought I would take this opportunity to discuss them and how they relate to your gardens.

Ladybugs are an important part of your garden ecosystem since they eat aphids, scale and even mites. In fact, one ladybug can eat 50 aphids a day! So if you are looking for a chemical-free way to protect your plants, especially your roses, having ladybugs in the garden is a fabulous solution. You can purchase them at your local nursery in the spring or find an online source, just be sure to follow the directions on the container. They need to be released into your yard at a certain time of day, I believe in the early evening, so that you have the best chance of having them settle into your space. Ladybugs produce a chemical that smells and tastes bad so predators won't eat them. Their red color is also a deterrent.

One more reason to love these little helpful bugs... they can lay up to 1000 eggs! All around, they are a 'good thing' in your gardens.

Happy February gardening everyone...if it ever stops raining!

Lynda Meikle
Your Garden Coach

February Garden Tips and To Do's

- Divide overcrowded perennials this month. Dig out clumps, cut them into a few sections, and replant in amended soil.
- Choose Magnolia's while they are in bloom, to be sure you like the flower.
- Prune fruit trees and roses if you have not done so last month. Also prune deciduous trees and shrubs while the leaves are off and you can see the structure of the plant.
- Start cool-season vegetable seeds such as beets, carrots, kale, swiss chard, spinach, lettuces and peas by planting directly into your amended beds.
- Apply chelated iron to Azaleas, Citrus and Gardenias if yellowing. This helps them green up for spring.

- Apply the 3rd and last dormant spray on fruit trees at the “pink-bud” stage. This controls the Peach –Leaf Curl that Peach and Nectarine trees are likely to get.
- This month there is a good selection of bare root fruit trees, grapes, and berries at your local nurseries, and also roses at a lower cost to you than later when they can be bought in bloom.
- Summer blooming bulbs can be purchased and planted now. Asiatic Lilies, Gladiolus, Dahlias, Canna Lilies and Tuberous Begonias are just some of the choices.



Lynda Meikle
Your Garden Coach
Contact: (925) 462-1484

outvisionsdesign.com

Email: outvisions@comcast.net



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