

Harlequin Ladybirds

Information and control advice



Harlequin Ladybirds:

This species of Ladybird is not native to the UK but originates from north eastern Asia. By 2004 they had arrived in the south east of England gradually spreading north throughout the country.

Because the female can lay over 1000 eggs they can sometimes be found in great numbers especially when looking to hibernate within domestic properties.



They are not harmful to humans, pets or property, they do not carry disease, they are not poisonous and they don't breed indoors.

Some see them as a benefit as they help control garden pests like aphids however they do pose a threat to our native species such as the two or seven spot ladybirds. Also Harlequin Ladybirds are more likely to bite than our native species. This is usually when they are searching for food, being handled or when woken from dormancy by central heating.

Control:

Harlequin Ladybirds usually find their way into houses via doors/windows or cracks & crevices around the exterior of the building. They are attracted to lighter colours such as white, grey or yellow but may also be attracted by warmer temperatures or lighting.

They will normally leave of their own accord however certain measures can be taken to control them.

Eliminate points of entry

- Fill any small cracks/holes/gaps around doorframes and window frames and fit a fine metal mesh over airbricks (on the outside and/or the inside of your home) which may help to keep the ladybirds out or prevent them from returning the following autumn/winter, while still maintaining ventilation.

Remove chemical traces

- Wipe down the areas where ladybirds have been (such as windows, window frames, door frames) with water and mild detergent
- Ladybirds leave chemical traces (pheromones) where they have been in order to attract other ladybirds.
- Regularly washing down the areas where the ladybirds have

been seen, especially from early spring onwards when the adults emerge from hibernation through to late autumn will help

Use of insect sprays

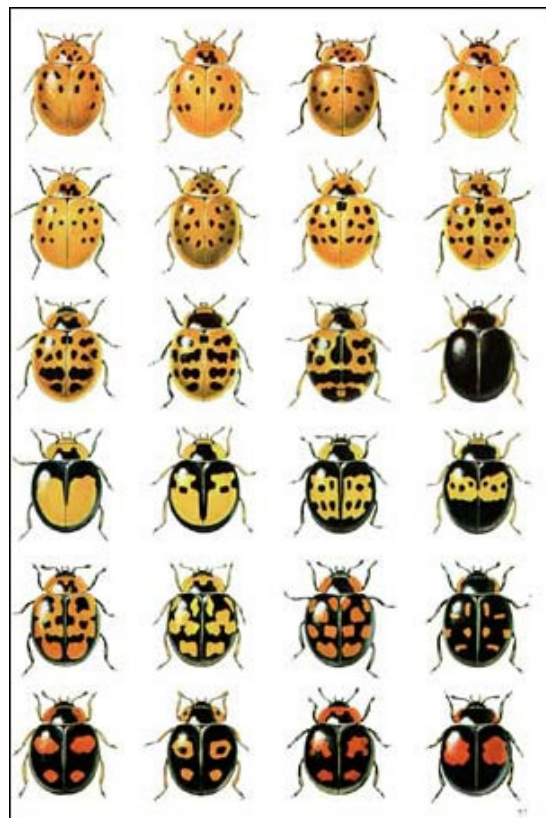
- It is best to use an insecticide **BEFORE** the ladybirds come indoors - during September and October is best - using a fast acting residual synthetic pyrethroid* spray or a general insecticide spray. (NB *Pyrethroid is the active ingredient)
- Thorough covering is essential. Suggested areas to spray are window and door frames, and areas where pipes and wires come through walls
- The spray acts as a chemical barrier which serves to prevent the ladybirds from entering
- Be sure to follow safety instructions for use of the product as shown on the container! Wash your hands thoroughly after use and avoid using this spray if you suffer from asthma. Do not use the spray near to goldfish and other indoor aquatic creatures
- If you have very large numbers of ladybirds in your house, pest control companies will treat for Harlequin Ladybirds but are often reluctant to do so as they cannot guarantee their elimination for any length of time and it can be expensive. They can kill the ladybirds which are seen wandering around but cannot successfully treat those which are hibernating for reasons already given
- Insect spray is ineffective once the ladybirds are indoors during the hibernation time (late autumn, winter and early spring) as the insect's physiological activity is very low and so the insecticide's chemical ability will be very low due to cooler temperatures

- Dead ladybirds can be picked up by a vacuum cleaner or dustpan and brush/broom

Vacuuming

- Use a vacuum cleaner with a narrow nozzle attachment to a hose or dustpan and brush/broom to pick up beetles (dead or alive)
- Pay special attention to windows and lighting fixtures as the ladybirds are attracted to light

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURERS INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON THE CONTAINER.



Above are some of the common forms of Harlequin Ladybirds.