EXAMPLES OF BENEFICIAL INSECTS FOR THE GARDEN

INSECT	WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE?	TARGET PLANT/PEST	SEASON	NOTES ON USAGE
Earthworm	Soil-borne invertebrate	Soil aeration; speeds decomposition process; improves root growth and water retention; earthworm waste is one of the best organic fertilizers	Soil and composting areas	Most active when temperatures are around 70°F, otherwise any time soil is not frozen	Many types of worms will work in the garden—red wigglers, night crawlers, garden worms are all great!
Ladybug	Carnivorous insect	Eats many garden pests; attractive; fun for children	Aphids, mealy bugs, scale, leaf hoppers, lace bugs, etc.	Late spring through summer	Release ladybugs in the evening—they don't fly at night
Mason Bee	General term for family of bees (*Osmia lignaria*)	Increases pollination rates, specifically for early spring fruit trees	Early blooming fruit and nut trees	Early spring	Bees are usually sold in larval stage
Nematode	Microscopic "round worm" (*Steinernema feltiae*)	Effective against soil-borne and wood-boring pests (pests that spend part of their life cycle in soil)	Cutworms, grubs, gypsy moth larvae, root maggots, leaf minor, etc.	Apply anytime the soil is not frozen; application lasts 2 years	Do not expose them to sunlight; suspend in water to help them transport themselves
Praying Mantis	Carnivorous insect	Voracious eater in the garden—eats any insect it can catch, even other mantids and beneficial insects	Very effective against aphids, beetles, caterpillars, grubs, grasshoppers	Late spring through summer	Usually sold in egg cases to be suspended in the garden; hundreds of insects hatch from each casing
Lacewing	Carnivorous insect	Eats many garden pests (up to 100 aphids per day!)	Diverse diet of aphids, larvae of several pest beetles and caterpillars, a variety of pest eggs	Spring through summer	Sold as eggs, pupae, or larvae; if using eggs, once they've hatched they must immediately be released AND food must be available; with no food source(s) the larvae turn aggressive and eat one another