

# Insects in the Garden Lesson

*The Insects in the Garden Lesson will teach students the difference between garden pests and beneficial insects in the garden.*

## Lesson Summary

1. Students will learn to identify beneficial insects and their purpose in the garden
2. Students will learn to identify pests in the garden
3. Students will review techniques for getting rid of pests in the garden

## Garden Checklist

- Explore** — Do you see any insects in the garden?
- Harvest** any items from the previous season
- Water** — Keep the soil moist so seeds can germinate
- Weed** — Pull out any weeds that are growing

## Exercise in the Garden

Remind the students when they look for insects in the garden that their bodies are moving, squatting and reaching. Remind the students that gardening is an excellent way to get their daily exercise. Lead the students in a quick garden warm up by having the students act out their favorite flying, hopping or crawling garden insect.

### Good Insect, Bad Insect

Take a moment to discuss why pests are bad for the garden:

- They spread diseases, making the plant sick
- They eat the plants and vegetables

Sometimes it can be difficult to see the actual pest, but their signs are more obvious

- Wilted leaves and vegetables
- Holes in leaves

Tell the students that not all insects found in the garden are pests. Some insects are beneficial for the garden. These insects:

- Eat the pest insects
- Pollinate the plants

### Insect Activity

1. Have the students look for insects in the garden. Remind them to ask first before touching any insects because some may bite or sting.
2. Have the students place a few of the found pests in the glass jar or container. Allow the students to study the insects with the magnifying glass.
3. When the students have explored the garden and have found all the pests they can find, give them a high five and thank them for helping to keep their garden free of problem insects.

#### Materials:

- clear glass jar
- magnifying glass

To find more lessons, visit  
[kccg.org](http://kccg.org)

### Reading in the Garden

Choose one of the recommended children's books to read to the class. What connections can you help students make between the book and what they learned about insects in the garden?

*Bugs in the Garden* by Susan Martineau

*Worms* by Valerie Bodden

*Creepy, Crawley, Baby, Bugs* by Sandra Markle

*We Dig Worms* by Kevin McCloskey

*Planting A Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert

*What Lives in the Garden* by John Woodward

### Review Questions

- **Why do we need to keep the garden pests out of the garden?** They eat the plants and vegetables, and they spread disease, making the plant sick
- **Can you name some bad insects in the garden?** Refer to the garden insects guide on [kccg.org](http://kccg.org)
- **Why do we want to leave the good insects in the garden?** They eat the garden pests, and they pollinate the plants
- **Can you name some good insects in the garden?** Bumble bee, wasp, beetle



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## Beneficial Insects

### Bee

Pollinate blossoms of fruits and vegetables



### Ground Beetle

Predator to many problem insects in your garden



### Wasp

Predator to many problem insects in your garden



### Praying Mantis

Predator to many problem insects in your garden



## Garden Pests

### Cabbage Looper

(broccoli, cabbage, collards, kale, arugula) Mature worms turn into white butterflies. Found on the underside of plants, they eat away at the leaves



### Cucumber Beetle

(cucumber, squash, melons) Eggs can be found on the underside of leaves. Larvae and adults feed on leaves. Carry a wilt disease that will kill plants



### Squash Bug

Bug sucks juices out of the stem of squash plants causing the plant to die. Difficult to control once they infest the garden



### Grasshopper

(general pest found on many plants) Damages the plant by eating away at leaves



### Aphid

(general pest found on many plants' new leaf growth) A tiny insect, found on the underside of plants, that causes leaves to look curled and blackened at the tips



### Tomato Hornworm

Worms and larvae damage tomatoes. They eat both the leaves and the tomatoes, but are fairly easy to see and pick off of plants

