

Ladybirds

Called ladybirds in the UK and Ireland and ladybugs in North America these bright creatures are appealing to children and a firm favourite in children's books and songs.

Ladybirds can be yellow, orange or red.

Ladybirds can have stripes instead of spots.



With their bright red body and black spots ladybirds are a favourite with kids.

*Ladybird, ladybird fly away home,
Your house is on fire and your children are gone,
All except one,
And her name is Ann,
And she hid under the baking pan.*

Ladybugs, also known as ladybird beetles or lady beetles, are part of the Coccinellidae family. The term coccinellids comes from the Latin word *coccineus* meaning "scarlet".

The origins of the name "ladybug" trace back to when European farmers would pray to Virgin Mary to prevent their crops from being

destroyed by pests. Ladybugs then ate up the insects! They were called “Lady beetles” after Virgin Mary and have always been loved by farmers since.

They are commonly red or yellow with black spots, but there are also black and white ladybugs as well as orange and blue. The color of a ladybug fades with age. Their colored bodies serve as their protection from predators because it makes them look terrible to eat.

Ladybugs can thrive in different habitats. They can live in suburban towns, forests, grasslands, and even in your house!

There are more than 5,000 species of ladybugs. The most popular is the seven-spotted black-and-red ladybug found in North America.

Some species have spots, stripes, or just be plain. Orange and blue ladybugs are more exotic.

Ladybugs smell with their antennae and feet.

The main predators of ladybugs are birds, frogs, wasps, dragonflies, and spiders.

Ladybugs eat aphids, white flies, scale insects, and spider mites. Farmers and gardeners love ladybugs because they eat pests – a lot of it! They can eat up to 50 aphids a day.

Ladybugs also eat soft-bodied ladybugs in desperate times when there’s no other food.

The ladybug life cycle is a quick one. It begins as an egg, then after four to ten days, it hatches into a larva. It becomes a pupae then an adult ladybug after seven to ten days. They can live up to two years.

As a defense mechanism, ladybugs will secrete oily foul-tasting fluid from their leg joints. This can be poisonous to some animals, but not to humans. Sometimes they play dead too.

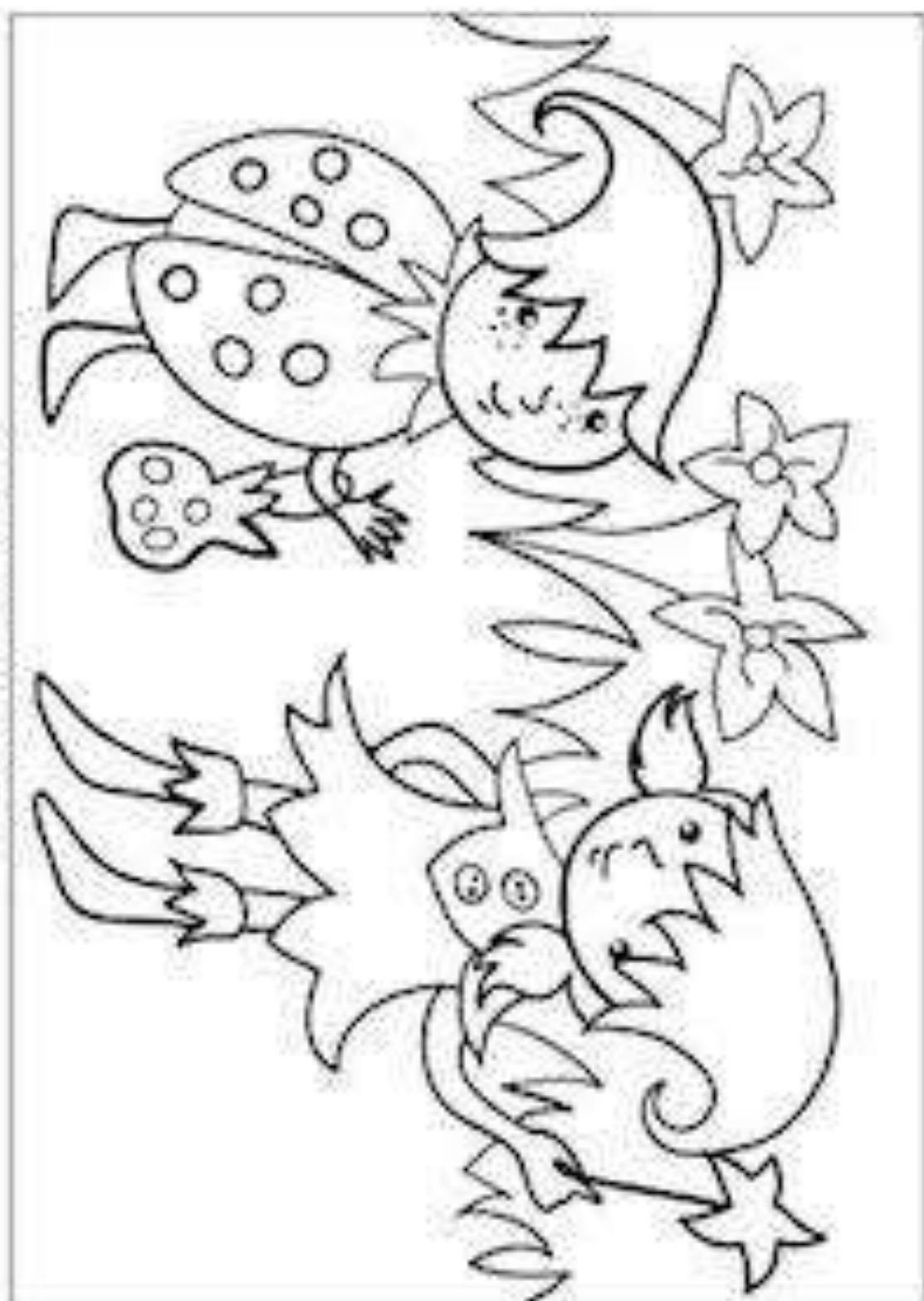
Large populations of ladybugs hibernate during winter. They are more active when it's spring or fall.

In 1888, an Australian ladybug was imported in California for a pest control experiment. The experiment helped triple California's orange crop.

The Asian ladybug (*Harmonia axyridis*), also known as harlequin ladybug, is the most common ladybug in North America. It is considered as a pest.

In the 1940s, the largest ladybug wash up on shore happened in Libya. Over 4.5 billion ladybugs were spread over 21 km of shoreline. The reason for ladybug wash ups is unknown but there are speculations that they either travel by water or get swept up by a windstorm.





Ladybird Spot Addition

Add spots to the ladybirds to help finish the number sentences.



$2 + 5 = \square$



$5 + 5 = \square$



$4 + 1 = \square$



$2 + 3 = \square$



$5 + 4 = \square$



$2 + 2 = \square$



ladybird