



Spotted ladybird basics

Harmonia ladybirds are native to Australia. They feed readily on many soft bodied insects, especially aphids and psyllids.

We offer two species, each adapted to a different climate. *H. conformis* is best suited to southern Australia, while *H. octomaculata* is more suited to our tropical and subtropical regions.

Both species are available for purchase in the adult stage as well as the egg stage.

Each jar of adults contains

- 30 ladybird beetles
- Honey and sterilised moth eggs for the beetles to feed on during transit

Each pack of eggs contains

- At least 150 eggs, divided up into several containers to minimise the risk of cannibalism once they hatch
- Sterilised moth eggs for the larvae to feed on when they emerge



Top left: *H. conformis* feeding on aphids, image courtesy of Jean and Fred (Flickr). **Right, above:** *H. octomaculata* feeding on tomato potato psyllid, © Western Australian Agriculture Authority (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, WA) 2018. **Right, below:** ladybird larva feeding on aphids.

How to release adult beetles

Your ladybird beetles should be released close to the pest population as soon as possible after arrival. We suggest the use of **sleeve cages** (see image) to improve establishment and provide an opportunity for you to follow the progress of your predators.

Storage: Adult beetles can be stored for several days if necessary. Keep them out of direct sunlight, in a cool place (but not refrigerated). Carefully placing an additional smear of honey and a moist cotton ball in the container will help.

What to expect: Your adult *Harmonia* beetles are capable of feeding directly and immediately on pests such as aphids and psyllids. More importantly they should soon start to lay clusters of small yellow eggs (each about 2 mm long). After a few days these eggs will hatch and young larvae will begin to feed.

How to release larvae

Your *Harmonia* eggs will hatch in transit or shortly after arrival. Once the tiny black ladybird larvae are visible and active in the containers it is time to release them. Gently tap them onto pest-infested plant material. If they don't find pests to feed on they will begin to eat each other or perish.

Storage: Larvae should not be stored beyond the time they begin to walk around in the container. They have a small supply of sterilised moth eggs to feed on, but prolonged storage increases the risk of cannibalism.

What to expect: It should be possible to observe the larvae developing as they clean up the target pests. They will grow and moult several times before pupating and emerging as adult beetles.

Other information

Your ladybirds will perform best if they have a suitable environment in which to live. You can encourage adult ladybirds to stay in your garden by providing flowering plants where they can feed on nectar and pollen. This will also help to attract and sustain populations of other beneficial insects and mites.

For more information call us on 07 4646 2628 or visit our website: www.bugsforbugs.com.au



Top image: sleeve cage - used to contain ladybirds close to pests, where they can feed and start to lay eggs.
Other images: *Harmonia* eggs, larva, pupa and adult.