

Make your Campus a resource

- Vegetable beds can take many shapes
- Wildscape in playground, with pond and “wilder” scape behind fence
- Nestboxes and purple martin colony house, bird feeders & birdbath
- Pocket prairie
- Compost heaps & worm bin
- Indoor SunLighter carts

Explore Habitats

- Habitat definition – 4 attributes
- How this drives rules
 - This is someone else’s yard and neighborhood (we don’t wreck it)
 - Flowers are someone’s dinner (we don’t pick them)
 - Birdbath is someone’s drink (we keep it clean and filled)
 - Nests and burrows are someone’s home (we’re polite when we look in)

This makes them comfortable

They’re in a neighborhood with rules just like their own neighborhoods

They learn who lives where, and how to keep everyone safe and happy

Knowing that other creatures are living their lives under their noses, gives them interesting goings-on to observe

Lots of Interesting Plant Hunts

- Leaf shapes – everyone gets a shape, brings findings to collection board
- Flower colors – keep tally marks of number of flowers of each color
- First-flower hunt – in native plantings, early February is good time to see what’s responding to spring
- First-bud hunt – early February is also good time to see tree buds swell



Learn to recognize beneficial insects

- Learn to recognize beneficial insects
 - Ladybug hunts with key
 - Assassin bug hunts (why we love aphids)
 - Praying mantis / Walking stick hunts

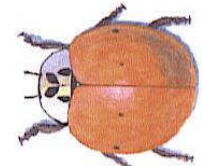


Sorry - not me. My name is *Coleomegilla maculata* and I am native to the US but I'm not a nine-spotted. I am too long and thin and my pronotum is black with red edges - not white.

'Not spots' My distinguishing feature is not a spot at all but the two paired marks that look like parenthesis. I'm called *Hippodamia parenthesis* or the parenthesis ladybug and I am a native.

Close - but no. I am the seven-spotted ladybug, *Coccinella septempunctata*, a close cousin of the nine-spotted introduced from Europe. I have seven spots instead of nine.

Yes!! You found me - congratulations! I have 4 spots on each elytra and one split in the middle to make 9. My pronotum is black with pale white marks on front. So, I am *Coccinella novemnotata*, the nine-spotted ladybug. Please "shoot" me immediately



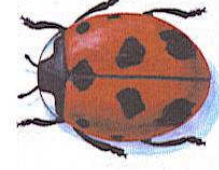
No! My name is *Harmonia axyridis*, the multi-colored Asian ladybug. As you guessed from my name I come in different patterns and I was introduced from Asia. I have either too many spots or two few. I'm probably the most common lady beetle you will find - sometimes inside houses!



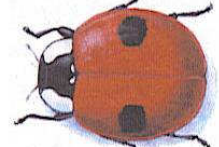
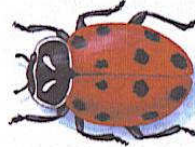
Checkers anyone? I have 14 spots and I'm from Europe. My spots are more like squares so although my official name is *Propylea quatuordecimpunctata* most folks call me the checker spot ladybug.



Not a nine-spot. I am a native with similar features but the wrong number of spots. Also, I take my name, *Hippodamia convergens*, from the two converging white lines on my pronotum.



Almost! I'm the two-spotted lady beetle, *Adalia bipunctata*. I don't think you will confuse me with a nine-spot but I am also a rare native. If you see me please shoot me and send in my image.



Grow your own Cockrell Butterfly Garden

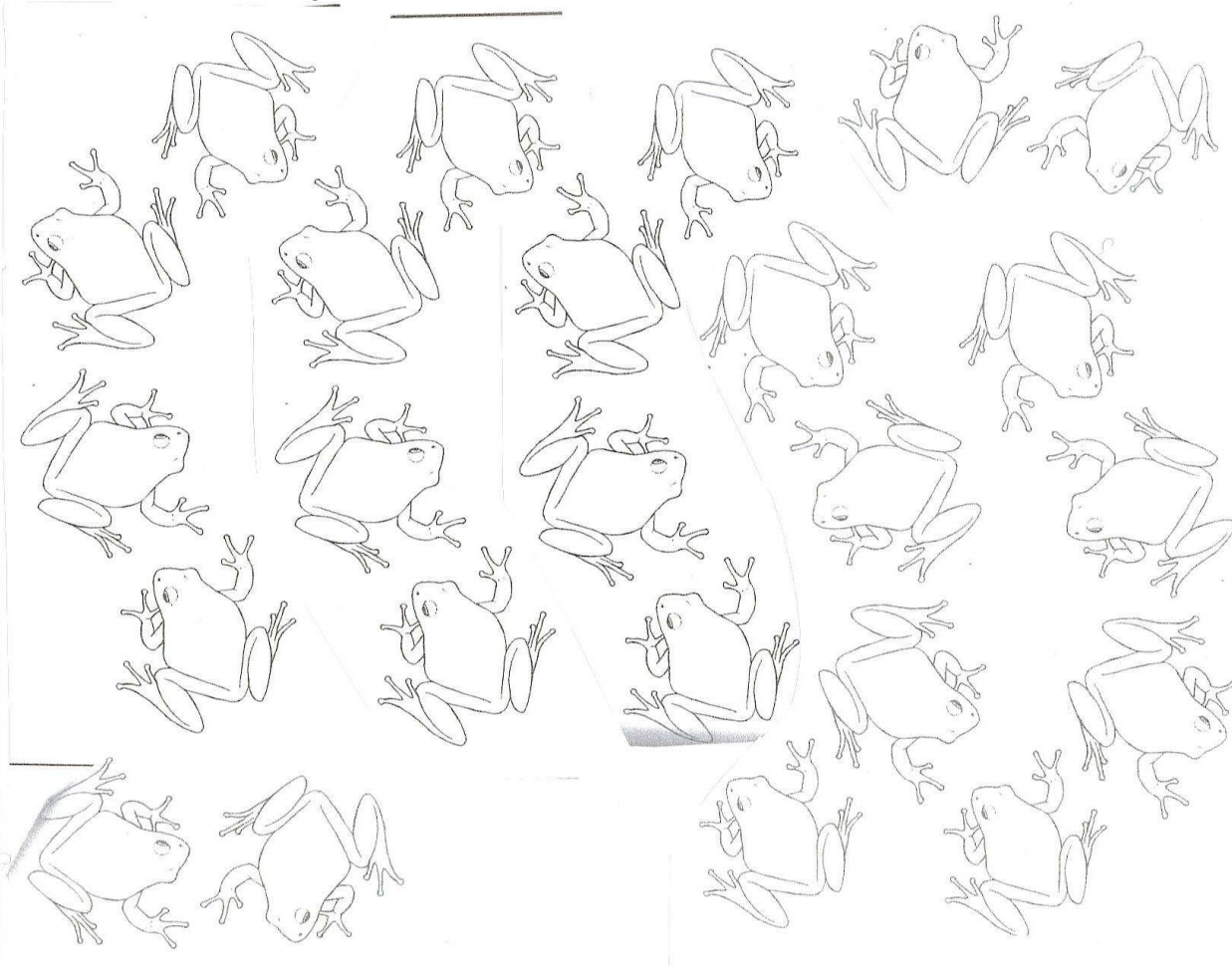
- Mexican milkweeds grow Monarchs
- Green beans grow long-tailed skippers
- Dill, rue or fennel grow black swallowtails
- Passionflowers grow Gulf fritillaries
- Cassias grow sulfurs
- Camphor trees grow spicebush swallowtails
- Citrus trees grow giant swallowtails
- Nectar plants won't grow caterpillars, but will feed adults

Want to identify what you have? Buy Butterflies of Houston and Southeast Texas, by John & Gloria Tveten

- Your butterflies will lay eggs on host plants that children can find
- The caterpillars take such a variety of forms that children will be fascinated
- The chrysalises will be far from host plants – fun to see how far caterpillars walk
- New butterflies will constantly enliven your playground and restart the cycle

Easter frog hunt teaches camouflage's value

- Practice coloring and cutting skills
- Practice sharing a fun experience
- Have one class color frogs with assigned, solid colors and cut them into individual pieces, then hide them
- Have second class spend limited time finding frogs . Make a bar graph of what they found
- Value of camouflage should be obvious from which colors are found the most



Hunts that require some special facilities

- If you have a pond (or can visit one)
 - Take recycled plastic cups for each child to “fish” for creatures with
 - All creatures discovered go into bigger tub
 - Tiny discoveries can be examined with Discovery Scope or QX5
- If you have some dirt you can dig in
 - Bury some fruit and vegetable scraps for a month. When you dig it up, you will find worms – and NO leftover scraps
- Your class can make their own worm-composting system
 - Your discovered nightcrawlers will live in a plastic tub of moist paper strips and banana peels
 - If you want to get serious, red wigglers will do composting in a real worm bin
 - The students will love “unpacking” the bin once a year to separate the fertilizer from the worms, and then making them new bedding

Invite birds to your campus

- Put up a simple birdbath and make a class responsible for keeping it filled with clean water
- Install a nestbox or two on your campus and see who comes to raise a family