

# Predators Wanted

Broadcast Fri 4 May 2012 at 10:00pm



Predators Wanted

## Transcript



### **SERIES 23 | Episode 06**

To a lot of people, insects in the garden can cause panic and alarm. But Jerry has found that by encouraging the good ones, you can let them help in the management of the less desirable ones.

One of Jerry's favourite spice trees is the cinnamon. It is also popular with one of his favourite predators - the Praying Mantis. But why does he like them so much? They gobble up grasshoppers!

Since Jerry moved into his garden in 2003, he's been keeping a checklist of animals like mammals, birds, reptiles and insects and has counted 331 species which call his garden home. To

encourage such a variety of creatures, you need to provide a variety of plants which provide shelter, pollen, nectar and by not spraying, allowing a few pests to be there so the predators have got lunch. To Jerry, it's simple - it means less spraying and more food.

This year, Jerry has dedicated the whole area around his lawn to encouraging predators into the garden. In the border around the lawn, he's used a mixture of flowers, vegetables and herbs - things like Cosmos, Chinese Spinach and following that, Basil. But he's going to add to this and has cleared a space for a boomerang bed. He's dug the soil over, added compost and is ready for planting.

## Predator-Enticing Plants

Jerry's selected a range of predator-enticing plants from 3 families - the Daisy family, the Carrot family and the Mint family. Before the plants go in the ground, he starts by spacing the plants out to make sure that it's not too crowded.

### Carrot Family

- **Coriander.** Jerry adds Coriander seed to the soil which is sown all over the bed and then planted over. The coriander seems to be a big success with the bugs and last year Jerry counted 23 insects visiting it.
- **Queen Anne's Lace** (*Daucus carota*). This is a compact ornamental and another good predator-attracting plant.
- **Giant Flat-leaved Italian Parsley** (*Petroselinum crispum* var.) One of the best predator attracting plants. It has enormous amounts of flower, plus it flowers for a long period of time. It attracts wasps because the adults need nectar. Their young prefer meat and they'll sting the caterpillars, lay eggs on them and control them in your garden.
- **Bronze Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'.) Can be tricky to grow in the subtropics, but Jerry is going to give it a try as the flowers will also help to attract predators.
- **Dill** Will flower almost all year round in the subtropics and its flowers are really attractive - particularly to a group of flies. Flies are parasitic and most will control caterpillars, so this is a wonderful combination of herb and pest control.

### Daisy Family

- **Golden Rod** (*Solidago* sp.) An old fashioned plant, not often associated with south-eastern Queensland conditions and yet Jerry's are hardly without a flower. It's a real magnet and it provides habitat - places for egg laying - and that's important if you want predators.
- **Cosmos.** Jerry uses a dwarf variety so that they fit into his small bed. The important thing about the Daisy family is they provide lots of pollen and that brings in Hover flies into

gardens and their young fight aphids.

## Mint Family

- **Bells of Island.** Jerry has decided to give this a try. The mint family has broad appeal to a wide range of beneficial predators and that's because it produces attractive pollen and nectar.

Jerry gives the bed a good drink and then adds some chopped sugarcane mulch. The mulch not only helps prevent the soil from drying out and keeping the roots cool, it also has a side benefit - chopped mulch, like sugarcane mulch, is just what Black Hairy Flower Wasps look for, so they can lay their egg chambers and they are brilliant predators of Curl Grubs.

To Jerry, the ideal of raising his own insect army for the garden is very appealing - "As these plants begin establishing, they'll draw in predator insects from far and wide and that means less damage, less spray and less work for this lazy gardener."

## Credits

- **Jerry Coleby-Williams, Presenter**

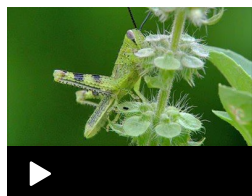
Broadcast Fri 4 May 2012 at 10:00pm



FULL EPISODE

2012 | SERIES 23 | Episode 06

### IN THIS EPISODE



PLAYING

**Predators Wanted**



**Farming Worms**



## Baskets of Colour

[Show more](#) 