ABOUT THIS GUIDE
Each section of this guide highlights a different group of insects or spiders commonly found in midwestern gardens. While this is not an exhaustive list of insects, it is intended to spark your curiosity to find examples in your garden. In the references, we provide suggestions for other sources of identification information. Taking a photo and posting it to iNaturalist is also a good way to get your species identified.

YOUR MIDWESTERN NATIVE GARDEN
Native plant gardens attract a host of native and non-native wildlife. Most of the images in this guide were captured in and around the Chicago area and were supplied by local gardeners and nature enthusiasts, just like you! Gardens change throughout the day and over the course of the season; be sure to note how your garden changes week to week.

MILKWEED & OTHER POLLINATOR FRIENDLY NATIVE PLANTS
The term “native plant” refers to plants that evolved along with the landscape over thousands of years. These plants have unique relationships with local wildlife and some, like milkweed, are host species, meaning they are the only food source for part of the insect’s life. Milkweed plants are the host species for monarch butterfly caterpillars. If you have milkweed in your garden, consider reporting your sightings to our Monarch Community Science Project (bit.ly/monarchmonitors). Milkweed is also home to a wide range of other species. See if you can spot them this year!

FIND THESE MILKWEED-RELIANT INSECTS THIS YEAR!

1. Aphis nerii
   Oleander aphid

2. Danaus plexippus (L)
   Monarch butterfly

3. Euchaetes egle
   Milkweed tussock caterpillar

4. Labidomera clivicollis
   Swamp milkweed leaf beetle

5. Lygaeus kalmii
   Small milkweed bug

6. Oncopeltus fasciatus (A)
   Large milkweed bug

7. Tetraopes tetrophthalmus
   Milkweed beetle
There are approximately 4,000 native bee species in the United States, most of which are solitary and without stingers. Honey bees, although common pollinators, are non-native. Europeans brought them to North America in the 17th Century.

When an insect interacts with the reproductive parts of a flower, they typically get covered in pollen. They then end up leaving some of this pollen either on different parts of the same flower, or on other flowers they visit for food throughout the day. Either way, pollen grains then get deposited on the female parts of flowers, fertilizing them. This allows the flower to eventually bear fruit that contains seeds, continuing the plant’s life cycle.

**BEES**

- **Andrena distans (M)** Cranesbill miner bee
- **Apis mellifera (F)** Western honey bee
- **Bombus impatiens** Common eastern bumblebee
- **Lasioglossum dialictus (F)** Metallic sweat bee
- **Melissodes bimaculatus (M)** Two-spotted longhorn bee
- **Melissodes sp.** Long-horned bee
- **Xylocopa virginica** Eastern carpenter bee

**BUTTERFLIES**

- **Cupido comyntas** Eastern tail blue butterfly
- **Papilio polyxenes (A)** Black swallowtail
- **Phyciodes tharos** Pearl crescent butterfly

About 80% of all flowering plants, including 35% of worldwide food crops, are pollinated by animals and insects. Some plants and animals have coevolved over millions of years, which means they cannot exist without each other. Pollination is a critical part of how plants reproduce and make more of themselves. Unlike humans, plants are stuck in one place. They use flowers to attract bees and other pollinators—like butterflies, beetles, bats, and birds—to feast on their nectar (carbohydrates) and pollen (protein).
MOTHS
While moths and butterflies belong to the same order, Lepidoptera, moths account for over 90% of Lepidoptera species. Moths are important night-time pollinators, but some species are also active during the day, including all three species pictured here.
COMMON MIMICS
Many insects pretend to be something else. Plant mimics will often look like leaves, sticks or flowers while animal mimics could pretend to be snakes, butterflies, ants, bees, wasps or even bird poop! The two most common reasons are to avoid being seen and eaten, or for a predator to hide so that potential prey does not notice it.

ANIMAL MIMICS (mimics in the left column below)

30 Eristalis transversa
Transverse-banded flower fly

31 Apis mellifera
European honey bee

32 Diapheromera femorata
Northern walkingsticks (mimicking a branch)

33 Limenitis archippus
Viceroy

34 Danaus plexippus
Monarch butterfly

35 Microcentrum rhombifolium
Broad-winged katydid (mimicking a leaf)

36 Spilomyia fusca
Bald-faced hornet fly

37 Dolichovespula maculata
Bald-faced hornet queen

38 Misumenoides formosipes
White-banded crab spider (mimicking a flower)

Some crab spiders change colors depending on the flower they are on! But mimicry is not just looks—it can also be behavior. Certain katydids mimic female cicada wing clicks to attract males hoping to mate; instead, they end up as food. Various firefly species mimic the blink patterns of other firefly females to lure unsuspecting males to their doom.
OTHER INSECTS AND SPIDERS

Insects and spiders are among the largest and most diverse groups of living organisms on Earth. Spiders are also one of the oldest groups of species, dating back nearly 380 million years.

This section provides a brief introduction to some of the species that we have seen in midwestern gardens. Use the links below to learn about other insects and spiders that you might find!

RESOURCES

Field Museum Field Guides
5. Beginner’s Guide to Moths of the Midwest - Tortricids
7. Creating monarch habitat in your Midwestern garden
8. Flies of Illinois
9. Wasps of Illinois
10. Common Wild Bee Genera of Illinois
11. Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region
12. Common Spiders of the Chicago Region

Websites
1. beespotter.org
2. inaturalist.org
3. bugguide.net
4. www.lostladybug.org/