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NY Researchers Give Ladybugs a Birds-and-Bees Talk

Bugged by decline in native ladybug species, NY researchers talk about the birds and bees

ITHACA, N.Y. September 6, 2009 (AP)

The Associated Press

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A year after they launched a nationwide search for dwindling native ladybugs, New York researchers are breeding colonies of them from insects found by citizen scientists in Oregon and Colorado.

Cornell University entomologist John Losey launched the Lost Ladybug Project to figure out why common native ladybug species had all but disappeared.

This summer, the researchers collected native nine-spotted and transversa ladybugs found by participants and started breeding them in the lab. They hope to shed light on why they've become so scarce.

The leading theory is that the decline was related to the release of non-native species for crop pest control decades ago. The European seven-spot and Asian multicolored ladybugs have become the dominant species.

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This June 18, 2009 photo provided by Cornell University shows a nine-spotted ladybug in a lab at Cornell in Ithaca, N.Y. A year after they launched a nationwide search for dwindling native ladybugs, New York researchers are breeding colonies of them from insects found by citizen scientists in Oregon and Colorado. Of particular interest are the nine-spotted, two-spotted and transverse ladybugs, three native species that have declined dramatically in the last decade. (AP Photo/Cornell University, Ellen Woods) (AP)

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