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# NY Researchers Breeding Rare Native Ladybugs

NY researchers breed rare beetles discovered by citizen scientists in Lost Ladybug Project

By MARY ESCH Associated Press Writer  
ITHACA, N.Y. September 5, 2009 (AP)

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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.

John Losey, an entomologist at Cornell University, launched the Lost Ladybug Project last year to try to figure out why once-common native ladybug species had all but disappeared across the country. The project, funded by the National Science Foundation, recruits citizen scientists — especially children — to search for ladybugs and send photos of them to Losey and his colleagues.

Of particular interest are the nine-spotted, two-spotted and transverse ladybugs, three native species that have declined dramatically in the last decade, possibly because of the release of non-native species to control crop pests.

"Between 1999 and last year when we started the program, less than 10 individuals of the nine-spot were collected anywhere in the country," Losey said. "That used to be the most dominant species across the U.S. and Canada."

Hundreds of participants across the U.S. and Canada have sent in thousands of photos since the project launched. While some of the photos were of native species, most of the pictures

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)

showed the multicolored Asian ladybug and the European seven-spotted ladybug, which were introduced for agricultural pest control and have become widespread as the dominant species.

The big breakthrough came in June, when 6-year-old Alyson Yates and her mom, Kate, started sending in photos of nine-

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spotted ladybugs from their rural backyard in Lakeview, Ore., in the sagebrush desert east of the Cascades.

"It was really an amazing find," Losey said. "Usually, someone just finds one or two. Alyson and Kate sent in a couple one day, a few more three days later, a couple more a few days after that. It became apparent they had a population out there."

So Losey and a colleague boarded a plane with their collecting nets and came back to Ithaca with 13 nine-spotted and more than 30 transverse ladybugs.

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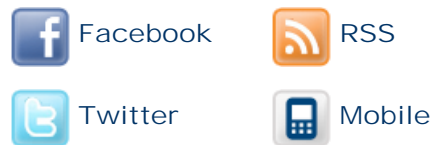
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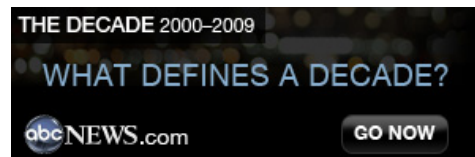
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