

## A Book Review

Lynn Sniderman, MGV 2012



### **Good Garden Bugs: Everything You Need to Know about Beneficial Predatory Insects**

*Mary M. Gardiner, Ph.D.*

**176 pages ISBN 978-1-59253-909-3**

Spring is the perfect time of year to think about working with beneficial insects for pest control in our landscapes. For those of you who attended the 2016 Garden to Table seminar in April, you heard speaker Dr. David Shetlar (known as The BugDoc) recommend **Good Garden Bugs** as a wonderful guide to beneficial insects in our gardens. It really is! Author Mary Gardiner is an Associate Professor in the Department of Entomology at The Ohio State University. According to her bio, much of her work takes place on vacant lots within Cleveland. Dr. Gardiner is studying how “redesigning vacant land to restore native plant communities, improve storm water infiltration, and provide access to locally-produced food influences the environmental quality of city neighborhoods.” Using her helpful, science-based resource will make it easier to improve our IPM at home and in community gardens.

Just about every page in **Good Garden Bugs** has several big color photos to help identify specific bugs. I particularly found it helpful to be reminded about the life cycle of important predators. Obviously, some insects eat more as larva vs. others that are consuming “the bad guys” when they are adults. All told, there are over 200 photos contributed by users of BugGuide, which is an amazing online resource for people who want to learn more about insects of any kind. The BugGuide.net website is maintained by Iowa State University Department of Entomology and is worth a look if you are not familiar with it.

Also helpful was the section on native plants that attract natural enemies. I can never get too many suggestions for habitat friendly plants. Dr. Gardiner’s “sweet seven” are annuals that can be easily added just about anywhere in your garden: dill, coriander, buckwheat, sweet alyssum, fava beans, *Phacelia* and borage.

After the useful introductory material in the volume, the chapters describe the insect specifics from mantids, to lacewings, beetles, predator and parasitoid flies, wasps, and much material on spiders. This book will encourage you to take a closer look at the beneficial insects in your garden and work with them to control the “bad guys” without chemicals. I am learning to control my impulse to just squish indiscriminately and to cultivate a garden that welcomes good garden bugs.