

Water Lilies

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Like many in Thailand we grow water lilies in large pots on the footpath in front of our house. The water looks cool and the leaves and flowers are attractive, but don't eat them. They are toxic to us, but lady beetles are commonly found walking about on the leaves.



Lady beetles (also called ladybugs or ladybirds) are predators that eat the aphid that suck sap from lily leaves and flower stems.

Four stages of growth are present in the image of aphids (above) on a water lily leaf. Immature (wingless) females give birth to 50 or so live female nymphs at about 5 per day (upper right). When a female aphid does mate with a male she lays eggs. The winged adult form (lower right) allows the aphids to colonise neighbouring pots.



A lady beetle nymph (above) and the adults all feed on aphid.

The lava, when fully grown, pupate on the upper surface of a leaf.



A swarm of pupating lady beetles on a water lily leaf.