

Parasitic Wasps:

The “ideal” Beneficial Insect Reservoir Bed contains shrubby, structural plants like perennial herbs or Mexican sunflowers, with more delicate plants—Bishop’s Lace, cilantro, or dill, for example—threading their way through the stalks.

This forms a protective lattice of stems, flowers, and foliage that offers food and shelter at multiple levels throughout the canopy.

Be sure to include the following types of plants:

Plants with tiny flowers, which are ideal for attracting and sustaining parasitic wasps.

Plants with lacy foliage, like achillea, cosmos, dill, and fennel. Lacy foliage attracts predators like green lacewings and ladybugs.

Perennial and annual herbs, for European honeybees and other pollinators.

Flowering native plants, which are the preferred nectar sources for bumblebees and native bees.

Bunch grasses, whose roots feed and shelter the larvae of ground beetles, which are voracious predators of snails, slugs, cutworms, and other ground-based garden pests.

Parasitic mini-wasps

Parasites of a variety of insects. They do not sting! The stingers have been adapted to allow the females to lay their eggs in the bodies of insect pests. The eggs then hatch, and the young feed on the pests from the inside, killing them. After they have killed the pests, they leave hollow “mummies.”

Braconid wasps (right)

These feed on moth, beetle and fly larvae, moth eggs, various insect pupae and adults.

If you see lots of white capsules on the backs of a caterpillar (below), these are the braconid cocoons. Leave the dying caterpillar alone!



Ichneumonid wasps

These control moth, butterfly, beetle and fly larvae and pupae.



Trichogramma wasps

These lay their eggs in the eggs of moths (hungry caterpillars-to-be), killing them and turning them black.

Plants that attract parasitic mini-wasps:

- *Achillea filipendulina* — Fern-leaf yarrow
- *Achillea millefolium* — Common yarrow
- *Allium tanguticum* — Lavender globe lily
- *Anethum graveolens* — Dill
- *Anthemis tinctoria* — Golden marguerite
- *Astrantia major* — Masterwort
- *Callirhoe involucrata* — Purple poppy mallow
- *Carum carvi* — Caraway
- *Coriandrum sativum* — Coriander
- *Cosmos bipinnatus* — Cosmos white sensation
- *Daucus carota* — Queen Anne's lace
- *Foeniculum vulgare* — Fennel
- *Limonium latifolium* — Statice
- *Linaria vulgaris* — Butter and eggs
- *Lobelia erinus* — Edging lobelia
- *Lobularia maritima* — Sweet alyssum – white
- *Melissa officinalis* — Lemon balm
- *Mentha pulegium* — Pennyroyal
- *Petroselinum crispum* — Parsley
- *Potentilla recta* 'warrenii' — Sulfur cinquefoil
- *Potentilla villosa* — Alpine cinquefoil
- *Sedum kamtschaticum* — Orange stonecrop
- *Tagetes tenuifolia* — Marigold – lemon gem
- *Tanacetum vulgare* — Tansy
- *Thymus serpyllum coccineus* — Crimson thyme
- *Zinnia elegans* — Zinnia – 'liliput'

