



Britain has about 46 species of ladybird, but only about 26 are generally recognised as such. They have a wide range of habitats, varying from coniferous woods to wetlands. Those most often seen are the two spot and the seven spot.

Other species include the twenty-two spot, the orange ladybird, the striped, and the fourteen spot. Size varies from 3-4mm for the twenty-two spot to 5-8mm for the seven spot.

By June and July, the larvae are appearing. These are like small black caterpillars with legs and often have orange spots. They are voracious feeders on aphids. They are much better at munching their way through greenfly than the adults!



They will pupate for a short time before hatching out as adults. In the winter, ladybirds hibernate in crevices in walls or tree bark and in houses, and can emerge in large quantities in the first warm days of spring.

In 2004, alarm was caused by the arrival in Britain of the Harlequin ladybird. This Asian species has been known to eat the larvae of the native ladybird in America, and there are fears that it may out compete our native ladybirds. The newcomer is hard to identify, as it is very variable in colour and pattern. However, it's big - 7-8mm - so if you see any that are smaller, these will be our UK species. The Harlequin ladybird has been spreading north and west and has now been seen as far north as Scotland.

To find out more and see more photographs of adult ladybirds and larvae, the website www.ladybird-survey.org is very useful.

