

GREEN BORDER/BACKGROUND

1. Fire ant attacking corn earworm larvae

A larva is one of the developmental growth stages of insect species that undergo "complete metamorphosis." The fire ant also undergoes "complete metamorphosis." This is a corn earworm larva. The red imported fire ant hunts and finds other insects to eat as food. Here a fire ant is attacking a corn earworm larva.



2. Fire ants on an okra bud

Fire ants occasionally feed on germinating seeds and seedlings of corn, sorghum, peanuts, soybeans, watermelons, cucumbers, sunflowers and other crops. Particularly in the spring when the weather is dry. They sometimes cause stand loss by feeding on the seeds, causing the seed to die and not germinate. Growers of okra, a common vegetable plant in the southern United States, are constantly battling fire ants because they are attracted to the oils in the plant.



3. Fire ant worker ants

Worker fire ants are wingless, sterile females. They protect the queen by defending the nest from intruders. They feed the queen only food that other worker fire ants or larvae have eaten first. They move the queen if she is in danger.



4. Lady beetles

Lady beetles are also called "ladybugs" or "lady-bird beetles." They are from the order Coleoptera. Both adults and larvae are beneficial. They hunt and feed on aphids, scale insects, spider mites, insect eggs and larvae.



5. Monarch butterfly

The Lepidoptera are one of the largest and most important orders of insects. There are almost 150,000 species in this order. Members of the order are readily recognized by the scales on the wings and body. An example is the adult monarch butterfly. It is orange with black wing veins and bodies.

