



Class Insecta, Insects

Order Neuroptera, Lacewings, mantids and others

Neuroptera means “nerve wings” and refers to the hundreds of veins in their wings. The order Neuroptera is comprised of several small families. Larvae and adults are usually predaceous. Some families are uncommon while others are present more in the south and west. All neuropterans have chewing mouthparts.

Green lacewings

Family Chrysopidae

Description and life history: Adults are green, 15–20 mm long, and slender. They have large, clear membranous wings with green veins and margins, which they hold over their body like a roof. Most have long hair-like antennae and golden eyes. Oval, white eggs are laid singly on a stalk approximately 8 mm long. Larvae are small, gray, and slender, and have large sickle-shaped mouthparts with which to puncture prey. When they reach approximately 10 mm, they spin a silken cocoon and pupate on the underside of a leaf. There are one to ten generations per year.

Prey species: Green lacewing adults require high-energy foods such as honeydew and pollen. Larvae prey on aphids and other small, soft-bodied insects, and are nicknamed “aphid-lions.” Some adults are also predaceous. Eggs, larvae, and adults are commercially available and may be purchased from insectaries. These common insects feed in fields, orchards, and gardens. They are commercially available.



Chrysoperla carnea, green lacewing adult. (356)
Photo: David Laughlin



Green lacewing larva. (358)
Photo: John Davidson



Green lacewing cocoons containing pupa. (357)
Photo: John Davidson



Green lacewing eggs on stalks. (359)
Photo: John Davidson