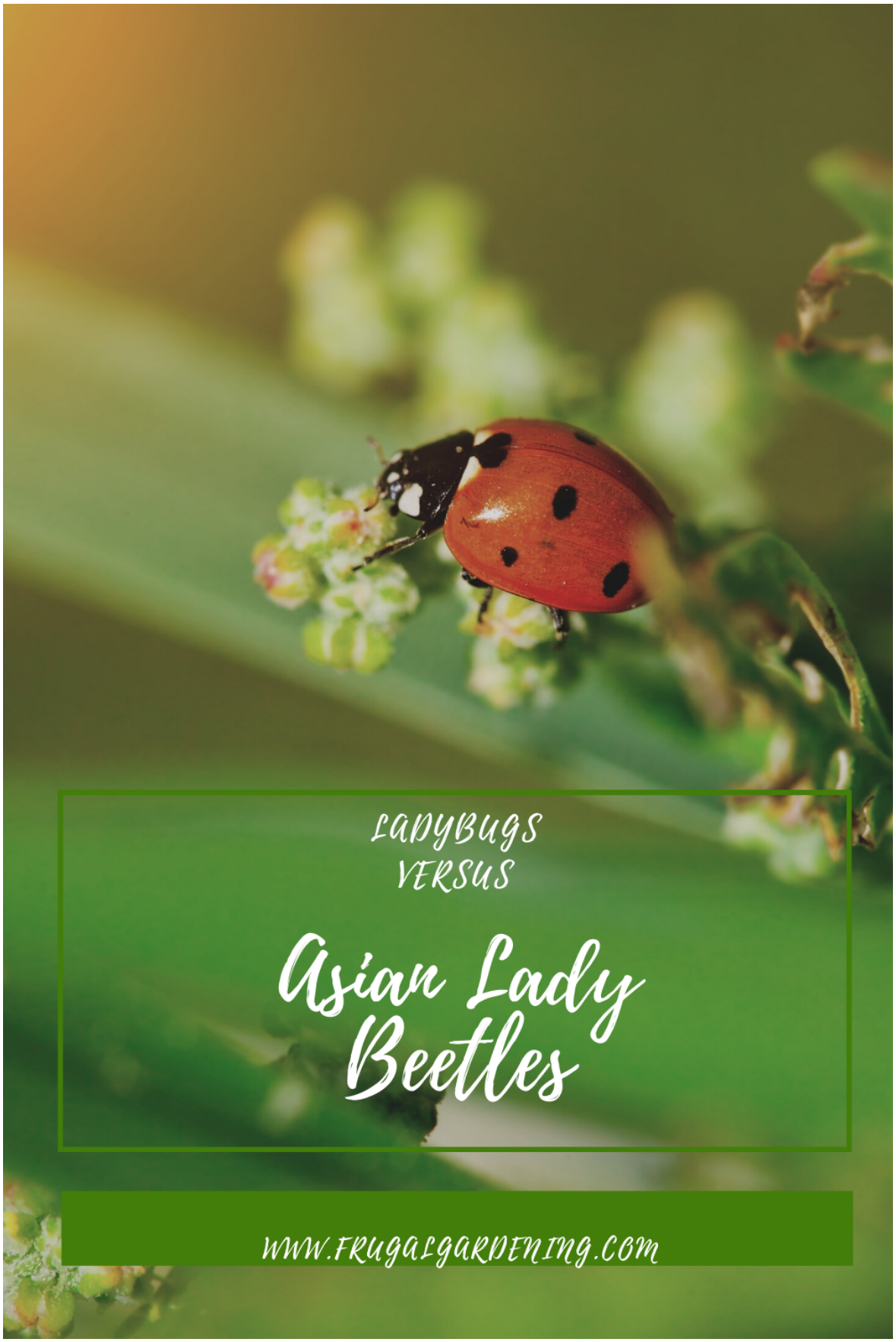
Ladybugs Versus Asian Lady Beetles



Gardeners—especially those new to the hobby—may find it tough to distinguish between bad bugs and beneficial insects. It can take some time to get a hang of which bugs to leave alone and

which to squish dead. Unfortunately, some good garden bugs have evil lookalikes. Case in point: ladybugs versus Asian lady beetles.

How can you tell the two apart? And which one do you want to keep around while you kick the other to the curb?

Ladybugs versus Asian Lady Beetles

Many gardeners are happy to find ladybugs hanging around their plots. While they don't pollinate plants like bees and butterflies, they hungrily snatch up a variety of garden pests, including aphids.

The Asian lady beetle, on the other hand, is considered a pest. They leave behind a smelly yellow residue and because they aren't native to North America, they've quickly overtaken resources destined for native ladybugs. They also bite and tend to gather in large groups—yuck!

While lady beetles look quite similar to ladybugs, they aren't even the same species! Confused yet? Not to worry, here's a breakdown of the differences between the two:

Ladybugs

- do not bite
- are beneficial garden insects
- eat pests like mites, aphids, and whiteflies
- are bright red and have black spots
- are very round (or oval-shaped)
- have nearly all-black heads with two distinct white markings
- overwinter outdoors

Ladybeetles

- are biters
- eat some garden pests

- gather in groups and often turn into household pests during the colder months
- leave behind yellow goop with a nasty smell, it’s not dangerous but it can stain surfaces
- are bigger than ladybugs
- have a coloring that varies from red to orange
- have a pointier shape
- always have a white M or W-shaped marking on their head

What do you do if you have lady beetles around or inside your home? Vacuum them up and immediately dispose of them. You can also buy store-bought traps to catch them. Orkin pest control recommends making sure all cracks and gaps in your home’s exterior are filled. Additionally, if you’re struggling to control the issue, don’t wait before calling in the help of experts.

Another Nasty Beetle

Another Asian beetle that wreaks havoc on gardens is the Japanese beetle. It’s actually more destructive than the Asian lady beetle, but a lot easier to tell apart. Instead of red-coloring, Japanese beetles have iridescent reddish-green carapaces that shimmer in the sunlight.

They would be lovely to look at if they didn’t eat everything in their path! Thankfully, they tend to attack gardens in cycles. One year, you might have a swarm of Japanese beetles descending on your beans and flowers, and the next they might be gone altogether.

Need some help with identification? Check out this helpful YouTube video: