

# Beetlemania

**Eric A. Neubauer**

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I used to spend the summer at the shore when I was young. A strong west wind would sometimes blow insects out to sea, and the tide subsequently brought them in again. I rescued many ladybugs that were still alive by moving them higher on the beach so they could dry out and fly away. I remember they were predominantly Two-spotted, Nine-spotted, and Convergent Ladybugs (the last has thirteen spots).

Seeing the swarms of Asian Ladybird Beetles at the end of last year, I wondered if there were any native ladybird beetles left and resolved to give it some serious attention this year. The results were not reassuring. Only one out of nearly a hundred individual ladybugs I have seen so far represented a native species.



Here are some Asian Ladybird Beetles, *Harmonia axyridis*, to refresh everyone's memory. The top of the head and thorax are mostly white. They typically have nineteen spots. However, patterns can be variable and spots sometimes merge.





Here are several other Asian Ladybird Beetles showing variation in color and prominence of spots. As was the case last the Fall, these are the most common species of ladybugs in our garden. The black and white markings on the head and thorax are a good way to identify this species.



This is a Seven-spotted Ladybird Beetle, *Coccinella septempunctata*. It is a European native already mentioned in an earlier essay.





I found another species, the Fourteen Spot Ladybird Beetle, *Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*, which is another non-native from Europe.



This spots of this dark variant of the Fourteen Spot Ladybird Beetle, *Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*, have become so large that the small amount of background left is divided into small islands. Note that the head and thorax pattern remains the same.





There is a form of the Asian Ladybird Beetle which is similar to this insect, but this appears to be the Twice-stabbed ladybird Beetle, *Chilocorus stigma*, due to the smaller spot size and lack of any white on the thorax. At last this is a native species which favors living in trees and eats scale as well as aphids. I believe I saw one of these last Fall too, but misidentified it.



The Spotted Lady Beetle, *Coleomegilla maculata*, looks a lot like a Ladybird Beetle, has a similar appetite, and is equally beneficial. Note that the first two body segments are black and red rather than black and white like Ladybird Beetles. It is a North American native.





**Above and left:** This is a Red-necked Cane Borer, *Agrilus ruficollis*. It is responsible for drooping shoots on our raspberry plants, but doesn't seem to decrease yield very much because it attacks areas of the plant that are beyond the fruit. The adults seem to like eating raspberry leaves.

**Above:** At first glance, this appears to be an Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis*. However, there are thousands of species in this genus. The Emerald Ash Borer is a destructive non-native pest.





**Above:** This species is similar to several borers in the *Oberea* genus. It is probably a Raspberry Cane Borer, *Oberea bimaculata*. I've only seen one of these so far. This borer was significantly larger than the two in the *Agrilus* genus.



**Right:** This medium-small beetle appeared only briefly in our prairie patch. The acrobatic troupe of Clover Stem Borers, *Languria mozardi*, represent a native species.





One of my favorites is the Warty Leaf Beetle, *Exema spp.*, a tiny beetle that looks like a caterpillar dropping. There's nothing more threatening than a rampant Warty Leaf Beetle.



Another time I was taking photos of a Warty Leaf Beetle, a small jumping Beetle came over to investigate. Suddenly the legs on the Warty Leaf Beetle were a lot shorter! Ladybugs also do this when they feel threatened.

The jumping Beetle has powerful hind legs which can make it disappear instantly. It appears to be some sort of Flea Beetle, but I couldn't identify the species or even the genus. Nevertheless, they are very common in our yard.







**Above:** This common tiny black beetle with a silver lining sometimes chases after its peers in a Keystone Cops sort of way. The one directly above appears to be at a gallop, but is actually standing still.

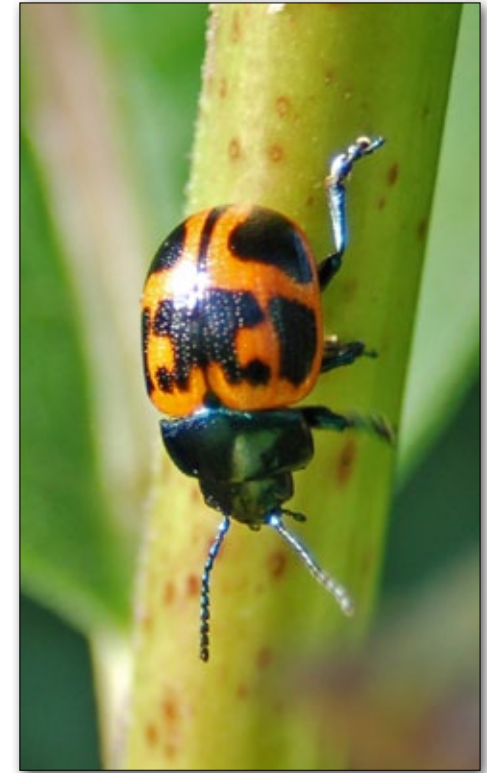
**Lower left:** A similar black beetle has a less obvious lining and its antennae are shorter with fewer segments.

Neither species could not be identified.





Eastern Milkweed Longhorns, *Tetraopes tetraophthalmus*, have been very common and are easy to find. A similar western species lacks the two elongated spots. Larva overwinter in roots of Milkweed.



Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetles, *Labidomera clivicollis*, arrived later and have been a lot less common. Adults sometimes overwinter between the woolly leaves of Mulleins. We don't have any Swamp Milkweed, but this species finds ordinary milkweed acceptable.

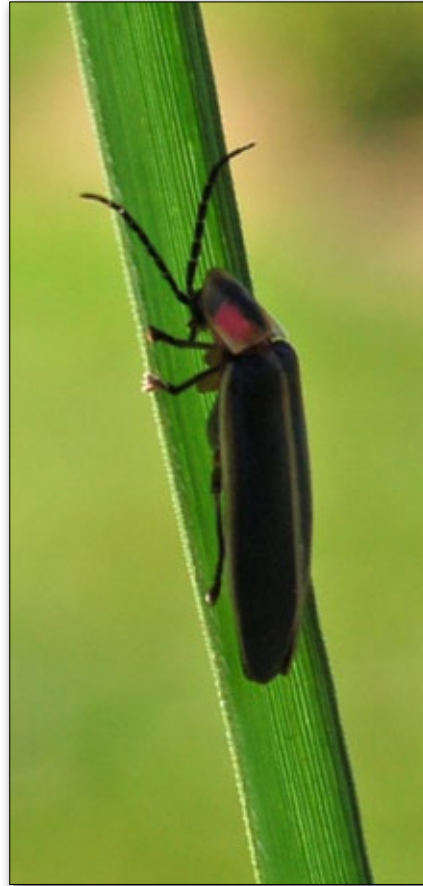
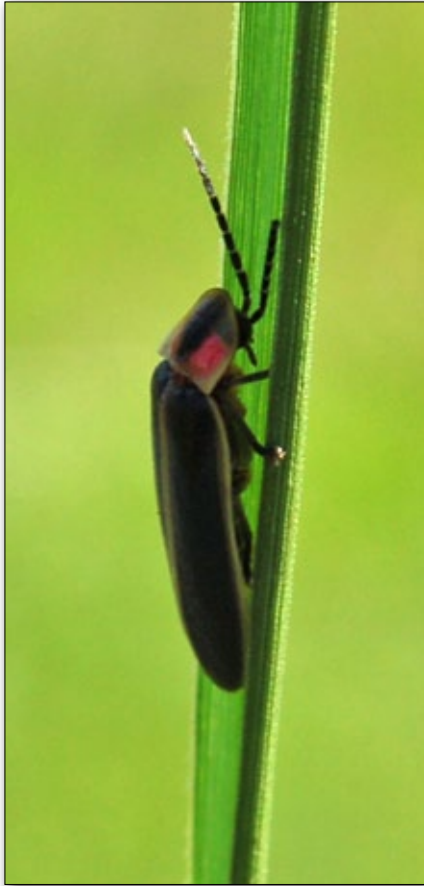




This is a Milkweed Tortoise Beetle, *Chelymorpha cassidea*. Despite the name, it eats the foliage of various plants, especially morning glories. We seem to have a similar species, the Golden Tortoise Beetle, *Metriona bicolor*, but I was unable to get a photo.



The very similar Striped Cucumber Beetle, *Acalymma vittatum*, has a black head and other slight differences. So, this must be something else. Some Flea Beetles were similar, but the Three-lined Potato Beetle, *Lema trilinea*, appears to be a match including the two spots on the thorax. As it happens, we're growing potatoes. This is not the better known Colorado Potato Beetle, *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*.



A probable Pyralis Firefly, *Photinus pyralis*, was hiding under a blade of grass in our prairie patch.

We probably have at least three different firefly species judging from the different light displays, and leaving undisturbed piles of branches and leaves under several trees seems to have increased the quantity.



This may be a Pennsylvania Firefly, *Photuris pennsylvanicus*. Note that the head is not covered by the pronotum as it is on the Pyralis Firefly. Also note that the wing covers are not edged in yellow on this particular individual.





This Soldier Beetle is more specifically a Margined Leatherwing, *Chauliognathus marginatus*. The amount of black on the wing covers varies. These are very common in our yard.



This may be a banded Banded Net-wing, *Calopteron reticulatum*. There are similar species and this individual in particular has more black on the thorax than most Banded Net-wing specimens.

