

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

How to provide water for insects

The Death Star has arrived in Texas and I know that my gardening now takes place in very short spurts during morning hours when it may not be so blazing hot. I'm getting questions on various types of insects moving indoors which tells me that it's hot and dry outside- as if I didn't already know- and that it's important for me to provide water for animals in the yard.

I have several ways of providing water and it varies depending upon what group I am targeting. I have a traditional bird bath for birds to enjoy. My dogs, not that the spoiled turds stay outside, have a baby pool for cooling off and drinking water from in addition to a tub of a water dish in another location. I also have a few dishes of water near the sidewalk for any thirsty dogs that people are walking. My hubby saw two immature screech owls drinking from one of these a few nights ago, so they have an additional purpose.



Insect water dish.

Then, there are the insects (of course). While insects are capable, and certainly will, of drinking from the above mentioned areas, it can be a risky undertaking for them. There is the possibility of drowning as well as being eaten by other animals that are also visiting regular water sources. To provide water for insects, you can use shallow containers filled with sand or pebbles or deeper containers with larger stones to allow a safer way for insects to access water without drowning. Another option would be to place a single large rock in a container of water.

If you want to go a step beyond water, you can provide sugar sources or ways for insects to get minerals or salts. For sugar sources, you can put out hummingbird feeders as you would for humming birds or you can try suet feeders holding slices of citrus or melon. To provide minerals and salts, you can create a puddling dish by mixing soil, compost, sand, and manure (this one is optional). Place the mixture in a shallow dish, create a small divot that can hold water, add a rock and water and you are good to go.



Puddling dish.



Melon (sugar source) in suet basket.

There are a variety of ways to help insects that come to your yard. If you want more ideas, watch this recent webinar that I held.

<https://agrilife-tamu.webex.com/webappng/sites/agrilife-tamu/recording/play/ebc08f13abd3477bba4feb38bfc47c7b>

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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