

Become a Lubber Lover

Eastern Lubbers are a NATIVE grasshopper that plays a vital role in Florida's ecosystem. Young lubbers emerge in spring in groups. You may see the black and red grasshoppers clustered together on a single plant. Like most insect species, few make it to adulthood.

There are many native species that feast on the young including box turtles, squirrels, birds, lizards, toads, snakes and more. Diversity in your garden means you are supporting an ecosystem that has creatures from all parts of the food chain.



credit: Jodie Groves

Northern Cardinal



credit: Michelle Stefken

Top: Barred Owl
Left: Eastern Gray Squirrel

Right: Broad-headed Skink



credit: Monique McShell



credit: Stephanie Means

Myth Busters

Lubbers are an invasive pest.

Eastern Lubbers, *Romalea microptera*, are a native species in Florida.

They have no natural predators.

Despite what you may have heard, lubbers have many natural predators. You may notice that of the hundreds that hatch, only a few make it to adulthood. That's because they are food for other animals!

Lubbers will destroy all my plants!

The truth is that a well-balanced garden will not suffer noticeable losses or damage from lubbers. You may see damage on their favorite snack, Crinum Lilies. In a native garden, you will see very little impact.



Building a Diverse Garden

Diversity in the plants you put into your garden will lead to diversity in the animals you see. You can attract specific species of butterflies with their host plant or offer general nectar plants. Some birds prefer specific fruit but a variety of fruit and seed bearing plants will offer a little something for everyone. We can welcome in wildlife by offering a broad range of plants that serve as food and shelter. All handouts available are available at wilcoxnursery.com/education/downloadable-resources.

Shelter

Grasses are a great way to provide shelter for rabbits, frogs, lizards, and small mammals. A variety of height and density in your landscape offers habitat for the widest variety of birds. An important shelter for many insect species, such as the luna moth, is leaf litter and dried hollow stems. Leave a space in your garden to be a bit more wild with leaf litter, uncut dried flower stalks, or a loose stack of branches and yard waste.



Water

Offering water will attract a wide variety of birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Insects need water, too!

Shallow dishes with a rough texture are ideal. Add a few rocks to create surfaces for pollinators to crawl on. Smooth surfaces can lead to pollinators getting trapped in the water and drowning.



Food

The best way to feed wildlife is to start at the bottom of the food chain with plants! Host plants and flowers feed pollinators, which are in turn food for other animals. Fruit and seeds feed small mammals and birds.

Plan seasonally so that there is always something to eat in your garden. Think about having winter blooming plants, fruit that ripen in fall for bird migration, and