Common Natural Enemies of Insect and Mite Pests in Roses

Aphid parasites. Tiny parasitic wasps are very important in the control of aphids in roses. Adult wasps lay their eggs in the aphid, and the developing larvae rapidly immobilize the aphids, eventually killing them and turning them into bronze or black, crusty, bloated mummies (see fig. 25). The parasite pupates in the mummy and then cuts a neat round hole, emerging as a full-grown wasp. If you see one mummy in an aphid colony, there are likely to be more. Parasitic wasps are also important in the control of scale insects, caterpillars, and many other insect pests.

Minute pirate bugs (Orius tristicolor) (see fig. 26) are tiny true bugs with black and white markings as adults. They are often among the first predators to appear in spring to feed on mites, insect and mite eggs, immature scales, and thrips.

Lacewings (Chrysopa spp. and Chrysoperla spp.) (see fig. 27) are common natural enemies of aphids and other soft-bodied insects. The gray-green to brown alligator-shaped larvae are the predatory stage of the Chrysoperla species. The green lacy-winged adults feed on honeydew.

Figure 25. Parasitized aphids crust over and form bronze or black mummies. A tiny parasitic wasp will emerge from this aphid.

Figure 26. The minute pirate bug (Orius tristicolor) is a common predator of mites, thrips, and insect eggs. As its name indicates, it is tiny.

Lady beetles. Many red and black lady beetle species are predators of aphids. The most common is the convergent lady beetle (Hippodamia convergens) (see figs. 28, 29), another common species in the garden is the multicolored Asian lady beetle (Harmonia axyridis) (see fig. 30). These lady beetles feed primarily on aphids and are predators in both the adult and larval stages. Look for the black, alligator-shaped larvae with orange dots and the oblong, yellow eggs that are laid.