Fireflies

Today on Gardening in a Minute: fireflies.

Fireflies, or lightning bugs, are a familiar sight to many of us, although perhaps less so to city dwellers.

Fireflies are beetles that use their luminescent abdomens to attract mates, and each species has a different pattern of flashes.

These flashing wonders come out at dusk or nightfall in woods or wetlands during the summer. Their chemical light is fascinating because it emits almost no heat, unlike light produced by electricity.

Some scientists think fireflies can be deterred by brightly lit urban areas, and that their populations may be decreasing because of mosquito spraying. To provide habitat for fireflies in your landscape, reduce or eliminate artificial lighting and keep pesticides to a minimum.

If you’re lucky, these insects will light up your summer nights!

For more information about fireflies and many other gardening topics, contact your county Extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida’s Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.