



### Stone Bank Farm Good Luck Charm

I walked into the greenhouse a couple of weeks ago after not having been around the farm for awhile. My work schedule at a local nature center is always a little crazy this time of year with school field trips and traveling nature programs. I drove over to Stone Bank Farm looking for some peace and tranquility.

It was cold and rainy, but inside the warm, humid space of the greenhouse, Kim was busy tending to the thousands of organic vegetable, herb and flower plants that would be sold at Stone Bank Farm's **Annual Spring Plant Sale** (*although the sale has come and gone, there are still plenty of flower, herb and vegetable seedlings available at the Market*). At my asking, Kim ticked off the numbers of tomatoes, onions, lettuces, and other vegetables that she and her small group of staff and volunteers had sown in the weeks and months prior for, both, sale and market:

- ✓ 1900 heirloom tomatoes (30 varieties)
- ✓ 3700 lettuce plants (9 varieties)
- ✓ 200 varieties total of non-GMO vegetables, herbs and flowers (that's thousands of plants!) all started from organic seed mixes weeks ago

**While the sheer volume of plants that filled almost every square inch of the greenhouse was impressive, it was the ladybugs that truly caught my eye.**



Kim had released 1,500 of the little guys (and gals) back in March to help control plant-eating pests while avoiding the use of chemicals. I read later that each adult ladybug can consume up to **5,000 aphids in a lifetime**. Even the larvae can eat up to 50-60 aphids per day! Kim and I watched with amazement as scores of ladybugs got down to business growing their population while hundreds of others voraciously worked on decreasing the number of the pesky yellow aphids that can suck plants dry with their feasting.



Once she has mated, the female ladybug lays a cluster of 10 to 50 eggs. Between spring and early summer, a single female ladybug may produce up to **1,000 eggs**.