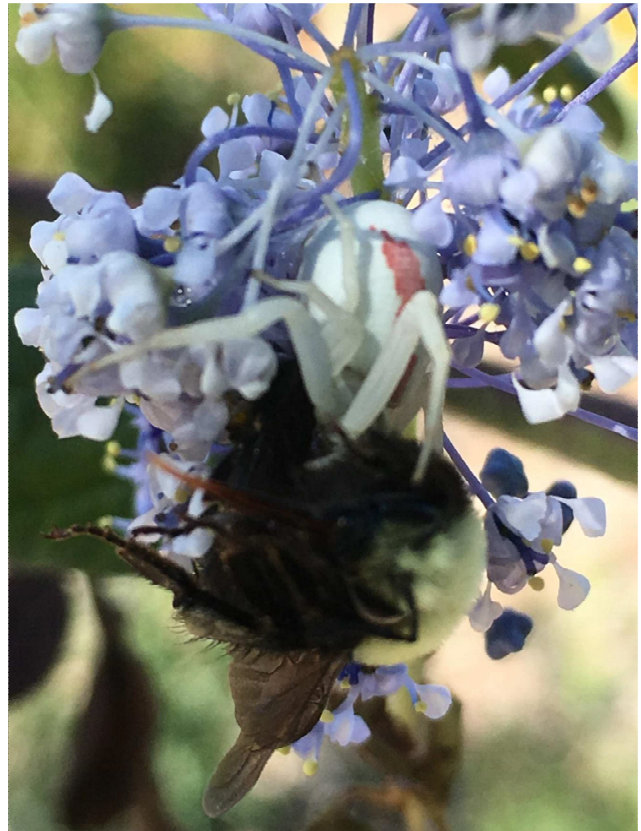


## Explore the Watershed Spring in the Pollinator Garden — A Bumblebee Picnic

At the May 21 pollinator garden workday, May Chen spotted a struggle for existence on the tip of a ceanothus blossom. What's going on in this photo? A crab spider, *Misumena vatia*, captured a bumblebee and is making it into a nice picnic lunch. Check out the cream-colored spider, with its distinctive red stripe, on top of its prey, a nice fat bumblebee.

These spiders don't build webs to trap prey, although they do produce spider silk for drop lines and reproduction. They are known as "ambush predators"—they hide out on a blossoming branch, and when a bee intent on pollination comes along, they strike. The prey is injected with venom and enzymes, the insides are dissolved, and the crab spider siphons off the contents. The bumblebee husk is left to join the detritus on the ground, a great example of the circle of life.



Individuals of some species of crab spiders, such as our very own *Misumena vatia*, can change color over a period of some days to match the flower on which they are sitting. Beautiful and amazing for us but deadly for our poor bumblebee.

--Kathleen Harris

