

July Fireworks

Happy July 4th!! Who doesn't love nature's fireworks, the lighting bugs (or fireflies). We have a prairie full of them, blinking off and on, lighting up the moonless night. It's awe-inspiring to see! I thought this would be a perfect post for the 4th of July! Although I couldn't get a picture of this, I was lucky enough to get some great close-ups of the underneath side as well as the top side.



East of the Rocky Mountains, we experience the *Photinus pyralis*. They are $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ " long and are named after the fly fabled for rising from the fire. For those of us who love to garden, these insects are most welcome. The larvae overwinter for 2 years before they pupate; their diets consist of other insect larvae, slugs, and snails.

The females are femme fatales!! When mating, the males fly around and flash while the female remain low in the vegetation and flash in return if they are interested. Some females, who have already mated, will flash to lure the male in so she can eat him. These insects emit a foul-smelling, foul-tasting chemical, making them unsavory and unpalatable for birds or bats.

