I don’t think we will ever live in a world where pesticides are not needed, but beneficial insects, mites, nematodes and fungi are sure stepping up to the plate to help out with many pest issues. The list of pests that can be controlled with beneficials is forever growing.

Over the years we have gotten a lot smarter in understanding how to use these little killing machines to our advantage. But did you ever stop to think about where these beneficials come from? Here are just a few of the privately-owned facilities that produce beneficial insects, mites, nematodes and fungi in North America.

Applied Bio-nomics Ltd. in Victoria, B.C., Canada, has been producing biological control agents for 30 years. Founder and president Don Elliott has been active in biological pest control since 1970. The company produces a variety of predatory mites and beneficials. It was the first to commercially produce many of the available biocontrols such as Hypoaspis miles, Delphastus catalinae, Stethorus punctillum and Aphidius matricariae. The company harvests daily, so the beneficials do not have to be stored. www.appliedbionomics.com

Becker Underwood, based in Ames, Iowa, sells beneficial nematodes throughout Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Becker Underwood first began selling nematodes in 1989, starting with the species Steinernema feltiae — widely used for the control of fungus gnats and western flower thrips. Currently it produces nine species of nematodes — not all for sale in the United States. Quality control procedures include counts on viable nematodes and bioassay checks on efficacy. Chemical compatibility information is available on its website. www.beckerunderwood.com

Biobest was founded in 1987 in Belgium by Roland De Jonghe. It rears and supplies more than 30 species of beneficial insects and mites, distributing to 44 countries. It offers a full line of biocontrol agents from predatory mites to whitefly parasites. Biobest also provides an up-to-date side effects manual on its website detailing how pesticides impact biological control agents. One of its technical support team members, Ronald Valentin, has developed a banker plant system using Black Pearl peppers, targeting western flower thrips. His system uses pepper plants to establish populations of the biological control agents. This program is proving to be both effective and economical for both indoor and outdoor ornamental production. www.biobest.be

BioLogic is a family-owned business located in Willow Hill, Pa., focusing on the production of beneficial nematodes. Founder Albert Pye has been involved in biological control since 1966. He worked at the University of Umeå, Sweden studying beneficial nematodes prior to starting his company. BioLogic’s list of nematode species include Heterorhabditis bacteriophora, Steinernema feltiae and Steinernema carpocapsae. It ships throughout the United States to commercial growers, homeowners and garden centers. www.biologicco.com

BioWorks is not a traditional insectary — it is more of a fungi farm, producing beneficial fungi to control
pests. The company opened its doors in 1993 in New York with the RootShield product. RootShield is
Trichoderma harzianum, a helpful fungus that fights plant pathogens like Pythium, Rhizoctonia, Fusarium,
Thielaviopsis and Cylindrocladium. It also carries Beauveria bassiana (BotaniGard) used to target insect
pests like aphids and thrips.
Both of these products are OMRI listed. BioWorks also carries a line of beneficial nematodes.
www.bioworksbiocontrol.com

IPM Labs in Locke, N.Y., was founded in 1981 as a service company. Then realizing the need for
commercially produced beneficial insects, IPM Labs started producing beneficials in 1985. Carol Glenister of
IPM labs said the company wants to find beneficial insects which establish themselves in greenhouses. IPM
Labs also services biological control programs that are on a release schedule. The company supplies more
than 40 different beneficial insects and nematodes. www.ipmlabs.com

In 1967 Dutch cucumber grower Jan Koppert first began experimenting with predatory mites to control red
spider mites. That work laid the foundation for Koppert Biological Systems BV, one of the worldwide leaders
in the production of biological control agents. In the U.S. it supports both vegetable and ornamental
production. Koppert has recently started producing Phytoseiulus persimilis at its California facility. Koppert
produces a wide range of biological control products such as predatory mites, beneficial nematodes and
parasites. Koppert also offers excellent information on its Web site about the impacts of pesticides on
biological control agents. www.koppert.com

Sterling Insectary was established in 1994 to raise predatory mites for a 4th-generation California family
farm, Billings Ranches. Matt Billings began growing the mites to have an unlimited supply of western
predatory mites and to reduce pesticide use in the family’s almond orchards. The firm expanded its line to
include other predatory mites like Neoseiulus californicus, commonly known as the “Cali mite.” Sterling
produces millions of N. californicus weekly, available in bottles or on bean leaves. Being growers
themselves, the company understands how complex using biological controls can be. Sterling ships
throughout the United States. www.sterlingnursery.com

Syngenta is most often recognized as a chemical and genetics company, but it also has a biological division
Syngenta Bioline Ltd. is active throughout Europe, North America and Japan. The company produces a
wide variety of biological control agents, from predatory mites to aphid parasitoids, but is probably best
known in the United States for the predatory mite Phytoseiulus persimilis, which targets spider mites. The
company recently added Amblyseius andersoni, a naturally occurring predatory mite in the United States, so
it will fit well into many IPM programs. A. andersoni tolerates higher temperatures and will work well in the
summer. www.syngenta-bioline.co.uk

The Bug Factory was founded more than 20 years ago by the husband-and-wife-team of Angela and Chris
Hale. Angela has a master’s degree in entomology and more than 25 years experience working with
biological control. With facilities in Nanoose Bay, British Columbia, Canada, it has all the proper permits to
ship into the United States. The Bug Factory raises a variety of insects and mites that are used in several
aspects of plant production. One of its fastest-growing customer bases is organic growers. The Bug Factory
provides controls for mealybugs, spider mites, fungus gnats and other pests. www.thebugfactory.ca

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are many more insectaries and biological distributors in North
America. For a more inconclusive list, stop by the ANBP (Association of Natural Biocontrol Producers)
website at www.anbp.org.

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