

Caterpillar Food Sources

Providing food plants for the larval stage will assure butterflies in larger numbers and greater variety. Butterflies often lay their eggs on the host plant preferred by the caterpillar. Learn to recognize eggs and to identify caterpillars and ensure their survival. Don't panic when you see chewed foliage; usually no permanent damage is done to plants. Some common butterflies and their food plants are:

- Black Swallowtail** – Dill, fennel, and other parsley family members
- Buckeye** – Plantain, gerardia, snapdragon, stonecrop
- Comma** – Nettles, elm
- Eastern Tailed Blue** – Legumes including clover, trefoils, and peas
- Great Spangled Fritillary** – Violets
- Monarch** – Milkweeds
- Mourning Cloak** – Willow, poplar, birch, elm, wild rose
- Painted Lady** – Cudweed, thistles, pussytoes, and other composites
- Pearly Crescent** – Asters
- Pipevine Swallowtail** – Dutchman's-pipe
- Question Mark** – Elm, hackberry, nettles
- Red Admiral** – Nettles
- Red Spotted Purple** – Willow, wild cherry, poplar
- Skippers** – Black locust, legumes
- Spicebush Swallowtail** – Sassafras, spicebush
- Spring Azure** – Dogwood flowers, wild cherry, viburnum, staghorn sumac
- Sulphurs** – Clover and other legumes
- Tiger Swallowtail** – Wild cherry, willow, tulip poplar
- Variegated Fritillary** – Passion flower
- Viceroy** – Willow, poplar, fruit trees
- Zebra Swallowtail** – Pawpaw and plant relatives



Books

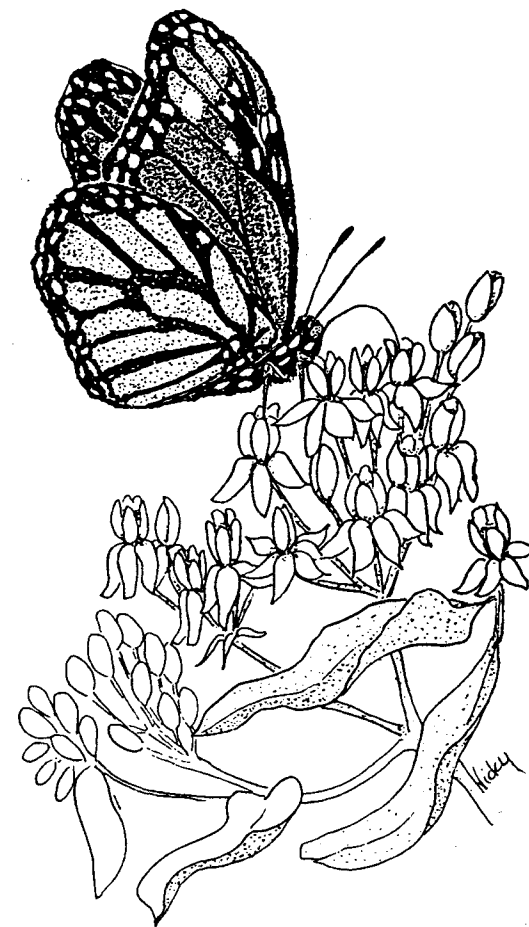
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- Butterfly Gardening**, 1990, Xerces Society and Smithsonian Institution, Sierra Club Books.
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- Gardener's Encyclopedia of Wild Flowers**, 1997, C. Colston Burrell, Rodale Press.
- Gardening for Butterflies in Hampton Roads**, 1993, Jeanne H. Pettersen and Connie Sale. Available for \$4.50 from Plants with a Purpose, P.O. Box 2884, Chesapeake, VA 23327-1686.
- Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers**, 1985, Harry R. Phillips, University of North Carolina Press.
- Handbook for Butterfly Watchers**, 1984, Robert M. Pyle, Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Newcomb's Wildflower Guide**, 1989, Lawrence Newcomb, Little Brown and Co.
- Peterson Field Guides, Houghton Mifflin Co.:**
 - Eastern Butterflies**, 1992, Paul A. Opler and Vickie Malekeri.
 - First Guide to Caterpillars**, 1993, Amy Bartlett Wright.
 - Wildflowers of Northeastern and North Central America**, 1975, Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret McKenny.
- The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies**, 1981, Robert M. Pyle, Alfred Knopf.
- The Butterfly Garden**, 1985, Matthew Tekulsky, Harvard Common Press.

Organizations

- Butterfly Society of Virginia, Inc.**, 5333 Challedon Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23462. Publishes newsletter, sponsors plant sale and garden tour.
- Day Butterfly Center**, Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA 31822. Glass-enclosed conservatory and outdoor gardens; butterfly gardening information.
- National Wildlife Federation**, 1400 Sixteenth St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-2266. Backyard Habitat Program.
- Norfolk Botanical Garden**, 6700 Azalea Garden Rd., Norfolk, VA 23518. Multi-acre Bristow Butterfly Habitat, open daily.
- North American Butterfly Association, Inc.**, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960. Publishes bulletin and newsletter. Sponsors 4th of July Butterfly Count.
- Virginia Native Plant Society**, P.O. Box 844, Annandale, VA 22003. Send SASE for "Nursery Sources of Native Plants," a list of suppliers of nursery-propagated native plants.
- Prince William Wildflower Society, A Chapter of the VNPS**, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 20108. Wildflower plant sale in May, regular membership meetings, wildflower walks and other activities.
- Virginia Tech Display Gardens**, 1444 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23455. Butterfly garden open daily.

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Wildflowers for Butterfly Gardens



Prince William Wildflower Society
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 83
Manassas, VA 20108

Gardens for Butterflies

Butterflies add an extra dimension of beauty to flower gardens, meadows, roadsides and other natural areas, and are second only to bees as plant pollinators. The widespread use of chemical pesticides and habitat destruction has reduced their population in recent years. But, fortunately for gardeners and nature lovers, it is fairly easy to provide a suitable habitat for many species of butterflies. Whether you're planning a wildflower meadow, a perennial garden devoted to butterflies, or just a few clumps of flowers to attract common species, the following steps will help:

Avoid using poisonous chemicals. Herbicides and pesticides will kill butterflies in both the adult and larval stages.

Locate the garden in a sunny protected area. Butterflies need sun to warm their wings and for orientation. Shelter from strong winds allows them to fly freely.

Observe butterflies in your area and plant the nectar-producing flowers they visit. Butterflies prefer single, tubular blossoms that stand up straight and are easy to land on. Favorite colors are yellow, purple, blue, white, pink and orange.

Use large splashes of color and plant for continuous bloom. Butterflies are first attracted to flowers by their color and a large mass is easier for them to spot. They are active from early spring until late fall and need nectar throughout the growing season.

Include caterpillar food plants. These lure females into the garden to lay their eggs and provide food for the caterpillars.

Provide damp areas or shallow puddles. Some butterflies drink and extract salts from moist soil and sometimes large numbers of males congregate around a puddle to drink.

Place flat stones in the garden for basking. A butterfly often perches on a stone or bare soil to bask in the sun which raises body temperature permitting flight.

Nectar Flowers For Butterflies

These attractive perennial wildflowers are excellent nectar sources for butterflies. Unless noted, all prefer sun and well-prepared garden soil. They can be grown in perennial gardens or wildflower meadows. Be sure the wildflowers you purchase have been nursery-propagated, not wild collected. (see "Organizations" for sources).

Aster, New England (*Aster novae-angliae*) Lavender-blue flowers with yellow centers on 3-5' plants in August and September. Likes a rich, moist soil. Many cultivars available.

Bergamot, Wild (*Monarda fistulosa*) Fluffy lavender flowers on 3' plants in July and August. Adapts to poor, dry soil. Many cultivars available.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.) Familiar showy yellow daisies with dark centers. A combination of annual, biennial and perennial species will provide nectar from early summer until frost.

Blazing Star (*Liatriis spicata*) Pinkish-lavender flowering spikes up to 5' tall in July. Pretty with purple coneflower and black-eyed Susans. Several other species are also attractive to butterflies.

Butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) Grows about 2' tall and has clusters of red-orange flowers in June and July. Prefers a slightly dry, well-drained soil. A favorite of Monarchs.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) There is some confusion about whether all butterfly species see the color red, but Black Swallowtails visit these fiery red spikes in August and September. Needs extra moisture for best performance; will bloom in part shade. Also attracts hummingbirds.

Coneflower, Purple (*Echinacea purpurea*) Lavender-pink flowers with orange cones on 3-5' plants June through September. Dried seedpods attract birds, especially goldfinches.

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) This and other coreopsis species provide the flat, open flowers that butterflies prefer. They grow about 2' tall, bloom throughout the summer, and adapt to dry soil.

Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) Goldenrods provide color and nectar from mid-summer until frost. Usually considered a meadow plant, many species and cultivars can be grown in the perennial garden including *Solidago sphaelata* 'Golden Fleece' and *S. rugosa* 'Fireworks.'

Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) Brilliant purple flowers on plants that grow to 8' in a damp meadows but can be kept lower for the perennial garden by cutting stems back to 2' in early June. Blooms in August and September.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium* spp.) Grows to 8-10' in its native damp habitat but can be cut back to 2' in early June for shorter blooming plants. Pale pink flower heads are a favorite of many butterflies, especially the Tiger Swallowtail. 'Gateway' is a shorter growing cultivar.

Milkweed, Swamp (*Asclepias incarnata*) Pale pink flowers on 3-4' plants in late summer and fall. Prefers moist soil but will grow in ordinary garden soil. This and the common milkweed (*A. syriaca*) and butterfly-weed are favorite nectar and larval food sources for the Monarch.

Phlox (*Phlox* spp.) At 1' with lavender-blue flowers, wild blue phlox (*P. divaricata*) provides nectar in the spring woodland garden. Summer phlox (*P. paniculata*) has magenta flowers on 2-4' plants. Many cultivars of summer phlox are available in a range of colors.

Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis*) fluffy light blue flowers on 1-2' plants in June and July. Spreads to a 3 sq. ft. clump. Needs good drainage.

Sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) Good nectar sources from late summer until frost. Many annual and perennial species and cultivars are available.

Native shrubs providing nectar include Native Azaleas (*Rhododendron* spp.), Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*). The non-native Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*) attracts many butterflies to the garden. Non-native nectar producing annuals and perennials are cosmos, lantana, heliotrope, sweet rocket, impatiens, marigolds, zinnas, 'Autumn Joy' sedum, lavender and gaillardia.