

Butterfly Plants for Your Garden



ESSENTIALS FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL BUTTERFLY GARDEN

1. **Adult nectar sources (N)** - attract and nourish adult butterflies.
2. **Larval host plants (H)**- attract ovipositing female butterflies, food source for developing larvae.
3. **Shelter** - vegetation that provides protection from temperature extremes, storms/rain, predators as well as locations for roosting/sleeping.
4. **Water source with fountain** - allows for easy and consistent access to water for drinking and thermoregulation.



GARDEN DESIGN

1. **Provide a combination of adult nectar sources and larval host plants** - attracts maximum variety of butterfly species; encourages butterflies to remain in your yard, reproduce and build populations instead of just passing through; allows gardener to appreciate all life history stages.
2. **Incorporate native plants into the landscape whenever possible** - most larval host plants are natives; adapted to region; produces a small but representative extension of the natural ecosystem; attracts other wildlife.
3. **Create horizontal and vertical heterogeneity** - choose plants that have different heights and growth habits; creates numerous microclimates which in turn appeal to a greater diversity of butterfly species; provides shelter; creates levels/strata of feeding opportunities).
4. **Aim for a consistent host plant and floral venue throughout the growing season** - choose plants that have different blooming times; ensures that garden remains attractive and productive as long as possible; provides food for butterflies during periods of low natural availability.
5. **Provide a number of different flower colors** - different butterfly species are attracted to different flower colors so include yellow, orange, white and blue flowers as well as reds, pinks, and purples.

6. **Provide a mix of flower shapes** - the feeding behavior and proboscis length of a butterfly dictate which flowers will be visited: long-tubed flowers, for example are typically more accessible to species with long probosces whereas many composites (daisy-like flowers) provide a feeding platform and easy nectar accessibility for smaller species.
7. **Plant in shade as well as full sun** - appeals to more butterfly species; many forest species prefer shadier locations.
8. **Plant in groupings** - aesthetically pleasing; provides masses of color; more apparent in landscape; allows larvae to locate additional food resources in event of shortage.
9. **Choose appropriate plants for each location** - understand each plan's basic water, light, and soil requirements; will perform and grow to its maximum potential.



GARDEN MAINTENANCE

1. **Give new plants a good start** - water and mulch new plantings to insure firm establishment.
2. **Fertilize** - a regular fertilizing regiment will produce maximum growth and flower production.
3. **Avoid pesticide application when possible** - all butterfly life history stages are very sensitive to pesticides; avoid *Bacillus thuringiensis*; when pest problem arises treat it locally; use beneficial insects/natural enemies.
4. **Learn to identify the butterfly species in your garden** - provides greater enjoyment; allows for gardener to "plant" for particular local species.



BENEFITS OF BUTTERFLY GARDENING

1. **Attract wildlife** - bring butterflies and other wildlife into your garden for purposes of enjoyment, observation, study, and photography.
2. **Ecosystem/habitat conservation** - a well-planned butterfly garden becomes a small, but representative sample of the surrounding habitat and as such provides a safe haven for butterflies and other wildlife to gather, seek shelter, acquire food and water, reproduce and build populations; do not underestimate the importance of even a small garden.
3. **Practical benefits**
 - o **Use of native plants** - hardy and drought-tolerant, disease/pest resistant, adapted to region so perform better under local conditions.

- **Food for natural enemies** - healthy butterfly populations attract and sustain healthy populations of beneficial insects/organisms as well as provide food for birds, lizards, mammals, etc. which in turn help control garden pests; most butterfly nectar sources also attract beneficial insects.
 - **Plant diversity** - less susceptible to pests/individual plants less apparent in landscape; large number of microclimates provide home and shelter for other insects including beneficial insects.
4. **Scientific** - keeping detailed logs on the butterfly species encountered, times, abundance can provide important and useful information on butterfly population numbers nationwide.
5. **Therapeutic** - provide soothing retreat from every day life
- Herbs - most herbs are also excellent butterfly attractants; useful culinary plants and provide wonderful aromatherapy.