

Components of a Butterfly Garden

All living things need a combination of food, water, shelter, and space. To attract butterflies to your garden, you need to make sure you include all of these necessities. You should especially be certain to include “Host” plants in your garden. When you can sustain the entire lifecycle of a butterfly, you will notice that you attract a greater number of butterflies and that they stay for longer periods of time.

FOOD

- **Host Plants** – You need to include host plants for butterflies to lay their eggs on; these plants also are the food for the caterpillars.
- **Nectar Plants** – Nectar plants are the food for butterflies.
- **Overripe Fruit** – Overripe fruit, such as bananas, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, watermelons, etc., also provides nutrients for butterflies.

WATER

- **Place to Puddle** – Butterflies ingest sodium and potassium from damp sand, soil, and mulch.

Adapted from Brenda Sattler
www.butterfliesinthegarden.com

SHELTER

- **Shelter from Wind** – Use trees, shrubs, tall plants, trellises, or fences to provide the butterflies shelter from the wind.

SPACE

- **Lots of Sun** – Most butterfly plants need full sun, at least 6 hours a day.
- **Sunning Spot** – Rocks and stepping stones can be used by butterflies to warm themselves when it’s cool.

OTHER INFORMATION

- **NO PESTICIDES!**
- **Plant in Groups** – It’s easier for butterflies to see a group of 3 or more plants.
- **Plant Arrangements** – To easily observe the butterflies in your garden, plant the taller plants in the back and shorter ones in the front.
- **Skip fall clean-up** to protect overwintering chrysalis and beneficial insects.

Host Plants to Get You Started

- **Milkweed**–*Asclepias spp.*—Monarch. Swamp Milkweed and Butterfly Weed
- **Dill/Fennel**–*Foeniculum**—Black Swallowtail. Parsley, and other carrot family plants also work
- **False Nettle**–*Boehmeria cylindrical*—Eastern Comma, Question Mark, and Red Admiral.
- **Pearly Everlasting**–*Anaphalis margaritacea*—American Lady.
- **Rue***–*Ruta graveolens*—Black/Giant Swallowtail

* Denotes non-native plants, however they are beneficial to attract butterflies.

- **Big Bluestem** (grass) - *Andropogon gerardii* - Delaware and Leonard’s Skipper
- **Oaks**–*Quercus spp.* Host to 500 lepidoptera
- **Spicebush**–*Lindera benzoin*—Spicebush Swallowtail
- **Tulip Poplar**–*Liriodendron tulipifera*—Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
- **Viburnum**–*Viburnum spp.*—Baltimore Checkerspot, Spring Azure, Hummingbird Clearwing moth
- **Willow**–*Salix spp.*—Compton Tortoise Shell, Dreamy Duskywing, Mourning Cloak, Red-spotted Purple, Viceroy

Nectar Plants

Perennials

- **Blazingstar**–*Liatris spp.*
- **Butterfly Bush**–*Buddleia davidii**
- **Cardinal Flower**–*Lobelia cardinalis*
- **Goldenrod** –*Solidago spp.* Nectar/Host to a variety of lepidoptera
- **Ironweed**–*Vernonia spp.*
- **Joe Pye Weed**–*Eutrochium spp.*
- **New England Aster**–*Aster novae-angliae*
- **Purple Coneflower**–*Echinacea purpurea*
- **Vervain**–*Verbena spp.*
- **Wild Bergamot** - *Monarda fistulosa*

Annuals

- **Brazilian Verbena** - *Verbena brasiliensis**
- **Heliotrope**–*Heliotropium peruvianu**
- **Lantana**–*Lantana spp.**
- **Mexican Sunflower**–*Tithonia rotundifolia**
- **Pentas**–*Pentas spp.**
- **Zinnia**–*Zinnia elegans spp.**

