

# Creating a Butterfly Garden



## Why Encourage Butterflies?

Butterflies are beautiful, complex creatures that provide much enjoyment for the gardener. They also are important pollinators, helping to fill the gap left by the decline of honeybees.

To create a butterfly habitat, you don't need a lot of space. Your backyard—or even just a few pots—can offer butterflies what they need.

- Select areas that receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day.
- Locate gardens or pots in areas that are sheltered from the wind.
- Provide a shallow water source, such as a birdbath or a dish on the ground. Butterflies do not like deep water.
- Provide shelter, such as trees and shrubs.
- Choose plants that vary in color, season of bloom, and height to provide foraging opportunities.
- Select flowers with different structures. The proboscises (tongues) of butterflies differ, and this determines which flowers they will choose.
- Choose plants that provide a long season of flowers, so that butterflies continue to visit your garden. Choose a mix of annuals and perennials. Annuals

bloom all summer, but must be replanted every year. Perennials generally return every year, but have a shorter blooming period. Many shrubs, trees, and vines also attract butterflies.

- Plant in mass (several plants of the same kind). This usually attracts more butterflies, as there is more nectar available to them at a single stop.
- Include nectar plants *and* larval plants.
- If at all possible, avoid using pesticides! Consider non-chemical methods of pest control instead. Remember, even biological controls such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* will kill butterfly larvae.

## Host Plants (Larval Food)



If you wish to create a true butterfly habitat, it is not enough to provide nectar plants. You should also include host plants. A host plant is a specific plant on which butterflies develop. For example, a monarch butterfly's caterpillars develop and feed on milkweed. The black swallowtail feeds on parsley and dill.

Planting an adequate supply of the proper host plants will give butterflies a place to lay their eggs. The eggs then hatch into small caterpillars (the larval stage), which consume their eggshells and then begin to feed on their host

plant. Caterpillars molt a few times before changing into a pupa, and eventually into an adult butterfly. Butterflies typically lay their eggs in late spring; the eggs hatch 3 to 6 days after they are laid. It takes 3 to 4 weeks for a caterpillar to pupate and 9 to 14 days to emerge as an adult.



To enjoy the complete butterfly life cycle, you have to be willing to allow their caterpillars to feed on foliage in your garden.

## Butterfly Host Plants

### Annuals

Marigolds  
Snapdragons  
Violas

### Perennials

Butterfly weed  
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)  
Hollyhock  
Lupine

### Shrubs

Lilac  
Spicebush

### Evergreens

Juniper

### Trees

Birch  
Cherry  
Dogwood  
Linden  
Poplar  
Willow

### Herbs

Dill  
Parsley  
Sweet Fennel



## Plants That Attract Butterflies (Nectar Plants)

### Annuals

Ageratum  
Alyssum  
Cosmos  
Heliotrope  
Impatiens  
Lantana  
Lobelia  
Marigold  
Nasturtium  
Nicotiana  
Penta  
Petunia  
Phlox  
Salvia  
Snapdragon  
Statice  
Sunflower  
Verbena  
Vinca  
Zinnia

### Perennials

Aster  
Bee Balm  
Blanket Flower  
Catmint  
Cardinal Flower  
Coreopsis  
Daisy  
Dianthus  
Goldenrod  
Helianthus  
Joe Pye Weed  
Liatris  
Hollyhock  
Purple Coneflower  
Rudbeckia  
Russian Sage  
Salvia  
Scabiosa  
Sedum  
Veronica  
Viola  
Yarrow

### Shrubs & Vines

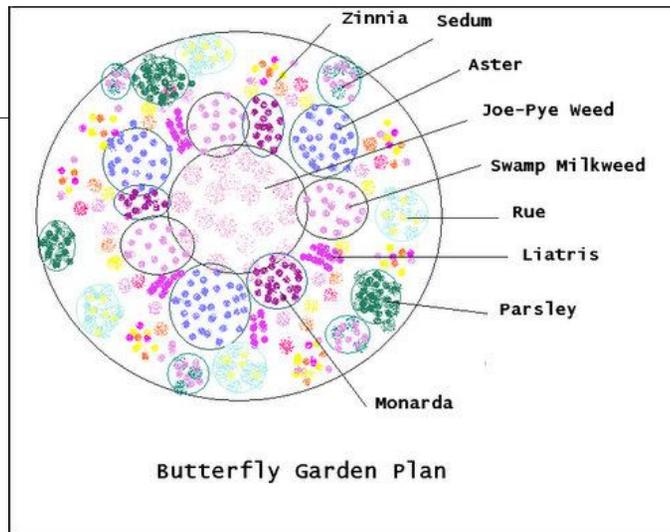
Azalea  
Butterfly Bush (Buddleia)  
Lilac  
Potentilla  
Viburnum  
Blueberry  
Honeysuckle vine  
Rhododendron  
Trumpet Vine

### Herbs

Catnip  
Chives  
Lavender  
Mint



Note: This particular Butterfly Garden Plan makes use of several large perennials (Joe-Pye Weed, Rue, Liatris, and Monarda). To create a cascading effect, add more medium-sized plants—such as Catmint instead of Rue—and plug in more flowering annuals, like cosmos, pentas, and salvia.



# HOW TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES



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**Garden Gate Greenhouse, Inc.**  
3415 E 500 S  
Peru, In 46970

765-473-4992