

• Overwintering spots

We don't see butterflies when the temperatures drop, but some of them do spend their winters in tree crevices, under bark, in log piles, or in building nooks. Hibernation boxes also are available. A log pile can serve as an overwintering hotel for butterflies. The logs are criss-crossed to provide as many open spaces within the pile as possible. The ideal pile uses logs 3 to 6 feet long, stacked 3 to 5 feet high, and protected at the top by canvas or another covering. It should be placed in a sheltered location near nectar flowers or shrubs and host plants.

Favorite Nectar Plants

(Perennials)

Aster (*Aster* spp.)
Bee balm (*Monarda didyma* 'Blue Stocking')
Black-eyed Susan or gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia* spp.)
Blazing star or gay-feather (*Liatris scariosa*)
Butterfly bush (*Buddleia* spp.)
Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Catmint (*Nepeta x faassenii*)
Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
Coreopsis, lance or tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
Coreopsis, thread-leaf (*Coreopsis verticillata*)
Daylily (*Hemerocallis* spp.)
False indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
Fernleaf yarrow (*Achillea filipendulina*)
Gas plant (*Dictamnus albus* or *D. fraxinella*)
Globe thistle (*Echinops ritro*)
Goldenrod (*Solidago* hybrids)
Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*), single varieties
Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*)
Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*)
Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote Strain')
Lilac, common or French hybrid (*Syringa vulgaris*)
Pearly everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*)
Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*, *Phlox maculata* 'Rosalinde')
Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
Showy stonecrop sedum (*Sedum spectabile* 'Autumn Joy')
Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)
Sunflower heliopsis (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)

White clover (*Trifolium repens*) also called Dutch clover

(Annuals)

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)
Cosmos 'Sensation' (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)
Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
Globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*)
Heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*)
Lantana (*Lantana camara*)
Marigold (*Tagetes* spp.)
Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*)
Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*), especially yellow varieties
Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) any variety
Pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*)
Stock (*Matthiola incana* 'Annuua' hybrids)
Sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), especially purple
Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

Favorite Host Plants

Alyssum	Parsley
Aster	Queen Anne's lace
Borage	Ragweed
Carrot	Stinging nettle
Cherry	Thistle
Crabgrass	Violets
Hollyhock	White clover
Marigold	Wisteria
Nasturtium	

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Gardening for Butterflies



A butterfly garden can be as simple as a massed planting of butterfly-favorite plants in a sunny corner of your yard, or as large as a specially planted area of a state park.

Butterfly Garden Characteristics

• Sunny location

Butterflies depend on the sun to warm their body temperature to the 85°-100° F range needed for flying. Scientists have even observed that butterflies position themselves during the night so that the early morning sun touches their wings to warm them.

• Moisture

If you've ever wondered why butterflies congregate at the edge of a mudpuddle, it's because they can't drink directly from open water. You can recreate a similar setting by sinking a container of wet sand in the ground. Add rocks or sticks for the perches.

• Rocks

On cloudy or cool days large rocks provide a basking spot to help warm butterflies for flight.

• Nectar plants and host plants

Although the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder thought caterpillars came from the morning dew that formed on tree leaves, we know that

specific butterflies come from specific caterpillars. Both the butterflies and the caterpillars need specific plants or flowers to satisfy their energy needs. Of course, the more varieties you can plant, the greater your chances for attracting more butterflies. Remember too, that planting in clumps — not rows — increases the likelihood of butterflies finding and choosing your garden for a feeding stop. The proper host plant for caterpillar feeding must be included to ultimately have the desired butterfly species. (See chart below.)

• Shelter

Trees, shrubs, fences, and buildings can provide protection from prevailing winds. A leafy cover offers a hiding place from hungry birds.

• Untidiness

If you want to attract butterflies, it helps to be tolerant because butterflies prefer a “natural” look rather than a “tidy” garden. That may mean including some plants that your neighbors call weeds. And it certainly means avoiding pesticides. Insecticides, of course, are the most dangerous, but herbicides also can destroy the needed nectar or host plants.

Butterfly	Host plant (caterpillar needs)	Nectar plant (butterfly needs)
American Painted Lady	burdock, ironweed, everlastings, pussy toes	thistle, knapweed, aster, yarrow, marigold, zinnia
Great Spangled Fritillary	violets	thistle, coneflowers, bee balm, milkweed, ironweed
Monarch	milkweed	milkweed, goldenrod, thistle, liatris, cosmos
Mourning Cloak	willow, elm, poplar, birch, hackberry	milkweed, rotting fruit, sap, shasta daisy
Pearly Crescentspot	aster	aster, thistle, black-eyed susan, milkweed
Question Mark	nettles, hackberry, elm	rotting fruit, sap, aster, milkweed
Red Admiral	nettles	rotting fruit, sap, aster, thistle, dandelion, clover
Common Sulfur	white clover, vetch, alfalfa	clover, goldenrod, aster, milkweed, phlox
Eastern Black Swallowtail	Queen Anne's lace, carrot, dill, parsley	milkweed, thistle, phlox, clover, alfalfa
Giant Swallowtail	prickly ash	milkweed, lilac, goldenrod, dame's rocket
Tiger Swallowtail	cherry, ash, birch, cottonwood, willow, lilac	thistle, milkweed, phlox, bee balm, clover, sunflower

