

Landscaping For Butterflies

Understanding the Butterfly Life-Cycle: Essential to Attracting Them

Plantings must be created which take into consideration the needs of both the caterpillars and the adults. Female butterflies lay their eggs on or near plants that the newly emerged caterpillars will eat. Most caterpillars eat specific plant material. For example, the Monarch caterpillar only eats milkweed leaves. Greater Fritillaries feed mostly at night on violets. Once fully grown the caterpillar attaches itself to a protected plant stem or underside of a leaf and forms a chrysalis around itself. Metamorphosis occurs and the adult butterfly emerges from the chrysalis. It then looks for colorful, nectar rich flowers on which to feed.

Follow These Steps For a Successful Butterfly Garden

- ◆ Survey the local butterfly scene.
Find out through field guides, local park systems, natural history museums and The Holden Arboretum which species of butterflies are native and the easiest to attract.
- ◆ Locate the garden in a sunny area.
Butterflies and most butterfly attracting plants require full sun.
- ◆ Plant masses of perennials and annuals.
Create large splashes of color since butterflies are attracted to color first.
- ◆ In general, plant flat-topped, highly scented, single flowers.
The nectar of this flower type is more accessible and easier to extract.
- ◆ Create continuous bloom throughout the growing season.
Early spring and fall are crucial times for caterpillars and butterflies to find enough food.
- ◆ Research host plants.
They provide food for caterpillars and lure female butterflies into the garden to lay eggs.
- ◆ Plant nectar producing flowers for butterflies.
Purple, yellow, orange and red-colored blossoms are the colors of choice.
- ◆ Do not use pesticides in or near a butterfly garden.
Use predatory insects, insecticidal soap or hand remove pests. Very few caterpillars become pests, most feed singly or in small groups. As the female lays her eggs they are spaced so the caterpillars will be able to find enough food.
- ◆ Create damp areas or shallow puddles in the garden.
Butterflies extract salts from moist soil, carrion, sap, rotting fruit, scat and urine. An alternative is to soak a bucket of sand with water and sink it in the ground.
- ◆ Provide protective areas for inclement weather and over wintering species.
Trees with flaking bark, coffee cans filled with dry leaves or butterfly boxes are ideal.
- ◆ Place flat stones in the garden.
Butterflies often perch with spread wings on stones, bare soil or vegetation. Basking in the sun raises their body temperature so they are able to fly and remain active.

Butterfly Facts

- ◆ **Identification:** Butterflies belong to the order Lepidoptera. All insects in this order have scales (Lepidos) on their wings (Ptera) and a long, coiled proboscis for a mouth. There are 20,000 species of butterflies in the world; 80 resident species in northeastern Ohio.
- ◆ **Life-Cycle:** For most species, their life-cycle usually lasts only a few weeks. However, some species like the Mourning Cloak over winter and live up to ten months.
- ◆ **Senses:** Butterflies have a proboscis for a mouth that works like a straw. The longest proboscis belongs to the hawkmoth, and measures 12 inches. Butterflies use their feet to taste and their antennae

to smell. Their sense of smell is very important since it helps them locate their favorite flower food source.

- ◆ **Ecological Significance:** Butterflies and moths pollinate plants and are a valuable prey source for rodents and birds. Butterfly and moth populations are on the decline due to:
 - Habitat loss
 - Increased use of herbicide and pesticide
 - Increased use of night lighting (attractive to moths)
 - Increased acreage that is mowed and manicured
 - Severe weather

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BUTTERFLY PLANTS

LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOMING PERIOD
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed	June-July
<i>Asclepias spp.</i>	Milkweed	Aug-Sept
<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Butterfly bush	July-Sept
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian	June
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple coneflower	July-Sept
<i>Eupatorium coelestinum</i>	Mist flower	July-Sept
<i>Eupatorium spp.</i>	Joe-Pye Weed	July-Sept
<i>Liatris spp.</i>	Gay-feather	July-Sept
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal flower	July-Sept
<i>Monarda spp.</i>	Bee balm/Bergamot	June-Aug
<i>Phlox spp.</i>	Phlox	July-Aug
<i>Rudbeckia spp.</i>	Rudbeckia	Aug-Sept
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i> 'Butterfly Blue'	Scabiosa	June-Frost
<i>Stokesia laevis</i> 'Klaus Jellito'	Stokes Aster	June-July
<i>Verbena spp.</i>	Verbena	July-Sept
<i>Vernonia gigantea</i>	Ironweed	July-Sept
<i>Zinnia elegans</i>	Zinnia	July-Frost

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