

BUTTERFLY GARDENING

Attracting Butterflies To Gardens In The Great Lakes Watershed



To attract the greatest number and variety of butterflies and have them as residents in your yard, you will need to have plants that serve the needs of all life stages of the butterfly. They need specific plant species on which to lay eggs, food plants for the larvae, plants on which to form a chrysalis and nectar sources as food for the adult.

Larval Host Plants

In their larval stage, butterflies require very specific host plants on which to feed. For example, the monarch butterfly, in its larval stage, feeds only on plants in the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae) such as common milkweed, butterfly weed and swamp milkweed. Don't worry if butterfly caterpillars are munching on the leaves - remember, this is their food. They rarely defoliate plants.

Attracting Adult Butterflies: The Search for Nectar
Adults searching for nectar are most attracted to orange, purple, yellow or red blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes that allow the butterfly to reach the nectar with its proboscis. Nectar-producing plants should be grown in open, sunny areas, as adults rarely feed on plants in the shade. 🌸

To successfully create butterfly habitat in your garden, do not use synthetic pesticides (which include herbicides, fungicides, etc.) as these are toxic to butterflies.

LARVAL HOST PLANT

wild lupine *Lupinus perennis*

poplar *Populus*, ash *Fraxinus*

elm *Ulmus*, willow *Salix*

turtlehead *Chelone glabra*

spice bush *Lindera benzoin*

sassafras *Sassafras albidum*

violet *Viola* spp.

dogwood *Cornus*, sumac *Rhus*

aster *Aster* spp.

New Jersey tea *Ceanothus americanus*

showy tick trefoil *Desmodium canadense*

blue vervain *Verbena hastata*

milkweed *Asclepias*

BUTTERFLY SPECIES

Karner blue, frosted elfin

mourning cloak

mourning cloak

Baltimore butterfly

spice-bush swallowtail

spice-bush swallowtail

fritillaries

spring azure

pearl crescent

spring azure, mottled duskywing

eastern tailed blue, hoary edge

buckeye

monarch

NATIVE PERENNIALS TO ATTRACT NECTAR-SEEKING ADULT BUTTERFLIES

Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*: Tubular lavender flowers from July to August. Grows 90-120 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*: Bright yellow blooms from June until frost. Grows 60-90 cm in most soil types. Full sun to light shade.

Blazing star *Liatris* spp.: Distinctive flower spike covered in purple flowers from July to August. Grows 30-150 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

Evening primrose *Oenothera biennis*: Yellow flowers bloom up and down the tall wand from July to September. Grows 30-180 cm in most soil types. Full sun to light shade. (biennial).

Joe-pye weed *Eupatorium maculatum*: Dense clusters of pinky purple flowers from July to August. Grows 120-180 cm, prefers moist soil but will also do well in average conditions. Full sun.

New England aster *Aster novae-angliae*: Prolific violet-purple flowers with yellow centres in late summer through fall. Grows 120-150 cm, prefers moist soil but will also do well in average conditions. Full sun to light shade.

Ox-eye *Helianthus helianthoides*: Showy yellow flowers from July to September. Grows 90-150 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

Swamp milkweed *Asclepias incarnata*: Purple-pink, fragrant flower clusters from June to August. Grows to 120 cm, prefers moist soil but will also do well in average conditions. Full sun.

Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*: Intriguing white flowers, which look like open-mouthed turtles in profile, bloom from August to October. Grows to 90 cm, prefers moist soil. Full sun to partial shade.

* **Butterfly weed** *Asclepias tuberosa*: Brilliant orange flower clusters from July to September. Grows 30-90 cm and thrives in dry sandy soil with good drainage. Full sun.

* **Cup plant** *Silphium perfoliatum*: Prolific yellow flowers from July to October. Grows 120-240 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

* **Culver's root** *Veronicastrum virginicum*: White flower spikes bloom from July to August. Grows 60-180 cm, prefers moist soil but will also do well in average conditions. Full sun.

* **Grey-headed coneflower** *Ratibida pinnata*: Yellow flowers droop around a distinctive, tall centre cone from June to August. Grows 90-150 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

* **Ironweed** *Vernonia altissima*: **Vivid purple** flower clusters from July to September. Grows 90-180 cm, prefers moist soil but will also do well in average conditions. Full sun.

* **Lance-leaved coreopsis** *Coreopsis lanceolata*: Prolific gold flowers from July to September. Grows 30-60 cm in most soil types. Full sun.

* **Stiff goldenrod** *Solidago rigida*: Large, flat yellow flower clusters in mid- to late summer. Grows 30-120cm in a wide range of soils, from wet to dry, rich to nutrient-poor. Full sun.

* **Wild lupine** *Lupinus perennis*: Spikes of blue pealike blossoms from May to July. Grows 30-60 cm in well-drained, sandy soil. Full sun to part shade.

* Not native to the Rouge Park.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES

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