



The Plant Professionals

Butterfly Gardening

Creating a butterfly garden is an exciting and rewarding endeavor! It is easy to invite butterflies to your area by gardening with their needs in mind. These beautiful insects will add bright color and entertaining antics to your garden display. Use the following techniques to produce a delightful garden in your own backyard.

How to Create a Butterfly Garden:

Locate the garden in a sunny area.

Butterflies and most butterfly attracting plants require bright sunlight

Plant nectar-producing flowers.

Butterflies visit flowers in search of nectar, a sugary fluid, to eat. Many native butterflies seem to prefer purple, yellow, orange, and red-colored blossoms. Clusters of short, tubular flowers or flat-topped blossoms provide the ideal shapes for butterflies to easily land and feed.

Select single flowers rather than double flowers.

The nectar of single flowers is more accessible and easier for butterflies to extract than the nectar of double flowers, which have more petals per flower.

Use large splashes of color in your landscape design.

Butterflies are first attracted to flowers by color. Groups of flowers are easier for butterflies to locate than isolated plants.

Include host plants in the garden design.

Host plants provide food for caterpillars and lure female butterflies into the garden to lay their eggs.

Include damp areas or shallow puddles in the garden.

Some butterflies drink and extract salts from moist soil. Occasionally large numbers of male butterflies congregate around a moist area to drink, forming a "puddle club".

Place flat stones in the garden.

Butterflies often perch on stones, bare soil, or vegetation, spread their wings and bask in the sun. Basking raises their body temperature so they are able to fly and remain active.

Do not use pesticides in or near a butterfly garden.

Most traditional garden pesticides are toxic to butterflies. Use predatory insects, insecticidal soap, or hand remove the pests if problems occur.

Become a butterfly watcher!

Get to know the colorful butterflies that visit your garden. They are easy to identify with a field guide such as *Butterflies and Moths- A Golden Guide* by R.T. Mitchell and H.S. Zim.

Some Recommended Nectar Plants:

Lantana
Butterflyweed
Pentas
Zinnias
Mexican Bush Sage
Rosemary
Cosmos
Sunflower
Indigo Min Marigold
Eupatorium
Asters
Most Wildflowers

Some Recommended Larval Plants:

Fennel
Parsley
Dill
Rue
Butterflyweed
Milkweed
Passionvine
Flame Acanthus
Cenizo
Pigeonberry