

Some Native Host Plants for Caterpillars

Black Swallowtail - Golden Alexanders (Zizia aurea), Heart-leaved Alexanders (Zizia aptera)

Little Yellow – Partridge Pea (Cassia fasciculata)

Pearl Crescent, Sulphurs – Asters (Aster spp.)

Monarch - Milkweeds (Asclepias)

American Lady – Pussytoes (Antennaria)

Sleepy Orange, Cloudless Sulfur – Wild Senna (Cassia hebecarpa)

Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite, Variegated Fritillary, Meadow Fritillaries – Violets (Viola spp)

Skippers, Common Wood Nymph, Little

Wood Satyr – Native grasses

Buckeye – Wild Petunia (Ruellia humilis)

Dogface Sulphur –Prairie Clover (Petalostemum)

Some Native Host Trees and Shrubs for Caterpillars

Dogwoods (Cornus)

Viburnums (Viburnum),

New Jersey Tea (Ceanothus americanus)

American Plum (Prunus americana) Lead

Plant (Amorpha canescens) False Indigo

(Amorpha fruticosa) Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis)

Elms (Ulmus)

Black Cherry (Prunus serotina)

Oaks (Quercus)

Spicebush (Lindera benzoin)

Willows (Salix)

Native Nectar Plants for Butterflies

Common Milkweed (Asclepias syriaca)

Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa)

New Jersey Tea (Ceanothus americanus)

Sand Coreopsis (Coreopsis lanceolata)

Prairie Clover (Petalostemum)

Illinois Bundleflower (Desmanthus illinoensis)

Showy Tick-Trefoil (Desmodium canadense)

Purple Coneflower (Echinacea)

Robin's Plantain (Erigeron pulchellus)

Rattlesnake Master (Eryngium yuccifolium)

Joe-Pye Weed (Eupatorium)

Flowering Spurge (Euphorbia corollata)

Sawtooth Sunflower (Helianthus grosseratus)

Blazing Star (Liatris)

Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis)

Great Blue Lobelia (Lobelia siphilitica)

Wild Bergamot (Monarda fistulosa)

Wild Quinine (Parthenium integrifolium)

Prairie Phlox (Phlox pilosa)

Mountain Mints (Pycnanthemum)

Yellow Coneflower (Ratibida pinnata)

Black-Eyed Susan (Rudbeckia)

Rosinweed (Silphium integrifolium)

Compass Plant (Silphium laciniatum)

Prairie Dock (Siphium terebinthinaceum)

Stiff Goldenrod (Solidago rigida)

Goat's Rue (Tephrosia virginiana)

Spiderwort (Tradescantia ohioensis)

Ironweed (Vernonia)

Culver's Root (Veronicastus virginicum)

Imagine our cities, towns and suburbs alive with colorful gardens of flowers, birds, and butterflies...

Imagine the spaces among our buildings providing homes for many plants, animals and other creatures we share this planet with...

Imagine being able to observe the marvelous processes of nature right where we live...

Not only is this dream possible, but it is being realized in many places already, and it can be done with less maintenance costs and effort than you may think!

The key is native plants!

Small Waters Education is a nonprofit organization promoting mutually beneficial relationships between humans and the rest of the natural world. We provide this brochure to help you design, plant and maintain your own butterfly garden. We are also available to help schools, churches, and community groups to create native gardens as educational tools.

For more information, contact:

small waters education

15820 IL Route 173

Harvard, IL 60033

www.smallwaters.org

815-648-1372

Creating a Butterfly Garden with Native Plants



Here are some tips for creating a garden that will nurture butterflies AND people.

PLAN

Find out what kinds of butterflies live in your area. The website <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org> has regional checklists of species by county and state.

Then, make a list of what those butterflies need. Butterflies have 4 life stages: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and adult. Adult butterflies will lay eggs on or near plants that the newly-hatched caterpillars can eat. These are called host plants. For example, the host plants for monarch caterpillars are milkweeds.

Adult butterflies feed on nectar from flowers blooming in full sun. Choose a site for nectar plants that gets full sun from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Host and nectar plant lists for common Illinois and Wisconsin butterflies are on the back of this page. You can find a more complete list of host plants at <http://www.thebutterflysite.com/create-butterfly-garden.shtml>

You will now need to choose which plants will grow best in the sun exposure and soil conditions of your garden space. This website can help you: <http://redbuffalonursery.com/plants.php> Your plant list should have enough varieties to provide blooms from spring through fall. If your site is large enough, consider including trees or shrubs. For small sites, your list should have mainly forbs (wildflowers) and some grasses. Native grasses have fibrous roots that help keep the weeds out.

With your final plant list, you can now design your garden. Measure your site and draw it on a piece of graph paper, allowing one square per square foot. For grasses and forbs, place one plant per square foot. Arrange plants by height with shorter plants in the front. Provide a sunny spot with a few flat rocks for adult butterflies to bask in the sun, and a shallow dish of sand, kept moist, for them to “puddle”, or drink water and minerals from.

Plant Sources:

Red Buffalo Nursery
www.redbuffalonursery.com
Prairie Moon Nursery
www.prairiemoon.com
Prairie Nursery www.prairienursery.com
Possibility Place Nursery
www.possibilityplace.com

PLANT

Give some thought to the edge of your garden. Will it be surrounded by lawn grass? If so, a strip of paving stones, mulch, or a root barrier edging will help keep the grass roots from creeping into your garden.

If there is existing vegetation on your site, it needs to be removed or killed before planting your plants. Here are several methods of doing this:

Mechanical removal: dig out existing plants by the roots.

Solar: Cut existing plants down and lay down black plastic anchored with boards and bricks or rocks. If it's lawn underneath, it will be killed in about 6 weeks. Other plants will take several months. Remove the plastic before planting.

Sheet mulch: Cut existing plants down. If soil is dry, give it a good watering. Lay down sheets of cardboard (recycled corrugated cartons) or 6 layers of newspaper, overlapping at least 6 inches. Water it well. Cut holes in the cardboard or newspaper the same size as the pots your plants are in. Dig through the hole to remove enough soil to insert the plant.

Native plants can be planted spring through fall. No soil amendments or fertilizer are necessary for native plants. Lay them out on your prepared site according to your design, and plant them in the soil. Be sure the plant sits at the same soil level as it was in its pot. Water your plants well and apply a two-inch mulch of wood chips or shredded leaves.

MAINTAIN

For the first year after planting your butterfly garden, it will need about 1 inch of water per week, whether from rainfall or irrigation. After that, the native plants will have sunk their roots deeply enough that they should need little or no irrigation. Hand weeding will be necessary, especially in the first year as the plants grow. After that, weeds will have a more difficult time competing with your plants, but will still need to be removed as they show up. Replenish the mulch as it decomposes.

Do not use pesticides in or near your butterfly garden. Even organic insecticides like Bt are deadly to caterpillars. Herbicides used nearby can damage or kill the native

plants, and kill the dandelions and clover that provide an early nectar source for adult butterflies.

In fall, when the plants turn brown, do not cut them down. Butterflies need stalks and leaf litter to hide in over the winter. Some butterflies overwinter as eggs, some as caterpillars, some as chrysalises, and some as adults. The dry stalks and seedheads will provide interest throughout the winter and attract birds. When spring comes, cut down the stalks and spread them around the plants or hide them nearby under a shrub. Some butterflies will not emerge from the stalks and leaves until later in the summer.

ENJOY

Check out these websites to help you identify the caterpillars, chrysalises and butterflies that you may discover in your garden: www.butterfliesandmoths.org www.naba.org

SPREAD THE WORD

Let your neighbors and friends know about your garden, and the butterflies that you are providing a home for. Encourage them to do the same. Together we can give our butterflies the food and shelter they need to thrive and to play their important role in the web of life upon which our lives depend.