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BUTTERFLY GARDENING

When people think about planting a butterfly garden, their primary focus is on butterfly nectar plants. Although these plants are extremely important in attracting butterflies to your yard, they are only half the equation! Before metamorphoses, a butterfly must first be a caterpillar. Butterflies lay their eggs on very specific host plants, called their **larval food plants**. In many cases, only one type of plant or one family of plant will do for a certain butterfly. If that larval food plant is absent, the butterfly will move on. Spicebushes (larval food plant for the Spicebush Swallowtail) are one example of this phenomenon. Others include Milkweeds (Asclepias family) as larval food plants for Monarchs, and Queen Anne's Lace (and related plants such as carrots and parsley) for the Black Swallowtail.

What this basically means is that once the eggs hatch into hungry caterpillars, they will eat the host plant (and only the host plant) before forming a chrysalis and then turning into a butterfly. Therefore, what you may consider "weeds" in your garden may be the link in the chain, the lifeline that encourages butterflies in your yard! AND, if you panic and quickly poison all caterpillars that you see without first considering who they are and what they may become, you will also be wondering where the butterflies went! *KNOW YOUR ENEMY* is the battle cry in organic gardening!!!

The second part of butterfly gardening is providing nectar sources for the butterflies themselves. Since butterflies only fly in warm weather (85 degrees and above), they are summer creatures sipping nectar from summer flowers. Some of their favorites are the Butterfly Bush (Buddleia sp.), Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa), Gaillardia, Purple Coneflower (Echinacea), Asters, Sedums, Verbena, and Lantana. Butterflies are nomads, and take off if their needs are not met. To keep them around, plan your garden to have a long succession of bloom of key nectar plants, spanning the season from June through September. The list of butterfly nectar sources is very long and you can design a beautiful garden around these choices.

Because butterflies need warmth, they love to "bask" in the sunlight on heated rocks. So be sure to include stone walls or decorative rocks, stone or brick pathways in your butterfly garden plan. If your garden is in an exposed spot, try to provide a windbreak by enclosing it with a fence or hedge. Full sun is the ideal site for a butterfly garden.

As you learn more about butterfly gardening, you will grow in your appreciation of the complex interactions between all living things. You will think twice before cutting down ALL the wild areas of your yard, instead consider them sanctuaries for butterflies and birds. You will be more careful and will avoid spreading poisons to control insects as you gain a new respect for the tenuous balance of nature that we are constantly seeking to understand.

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Nectar Flowers for CT Butterflies

ANNUALS, BIENNIALS, AND TENDER PERENNIALS

Ageratum
Bidens
Cleome
Cosmos
Cuphea (Elfin Herb and Firecracker flower)
Gomphrena (Globe Amaranth)
Heliotrope
Lantana
Larkspur
Lobelia
Lunaria (money plants)
Marigolds (single varieties only)
Mirabilis (Four O'clocks)
Morning Glory
Nicotiana (especially for moths)
Pentas
Petunia (single varieties only)
Scabiosa (annual form)
Statice
Sweet William
Thunbergia (Black Eyed Susan Vine)
Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower)
Verbena (especially Verbena bonariensis)
Zinnia

TREES, SHRUBS AND VINES

Abelia
Aesculus (Buckeye)
Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)
Caryopteris (Blue Mist Shrub)
Ceonanthus (New Jersey Tea)
Cephalanthus (Buttonbush)
Clethra (summersweet)
Kolkwitzia (Beauty bush)
Lonicera (Honeysuckle)
Philadelphus (Mock orange)
Prunus (plums, cherry)
Salix (willow)
Syringa (Lilac)
Tilia (Linden, basswood)
Vaccinium (Blueberry bush)

WILDFLOWERS AND "WEEDS"

Clover
Dandelions
Fleabane (Erigeron)
Hawkweed (Hieracium)

Knapweed (Centaurea)
Potentilla simplex (Cinquefoil)
Queen Anne's Lace
Thistle
Vetches (Vicia)
Winter cress (Barbarea)

PERENNIAL FLOWERS AND HERBS

Achillea (Yarrow)
Allium
Aurinia (Basket of Gold Alyssum)
Arabis
Aster
Aubrieta (Rock Cress)
Centranthus (Red Valerian)
Coreopsis
Dendranthemum (daisy types)
Echinacea (Coneflower)
Echinops (Globe thistle)
Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)
Filipendula purpurea
Foeniculum (Fennel)
Gaillardia Daisy
Geranium (Cranesbills, perennial form)
Helenium
Helianthus (Perennial Sunflowers)
Hemerocallis (Daylily)
Hibiscus
Hyssop
Lavender
Leucanthemum (Shasta Daisy)
Liatris
Lilium
Lobelia cardinalis
Mint
Monarda (Bee Balm)
Myosotis
Nepeta (Catmint and catnip)
Phlox
Physostegia (Obedient Plant)
Primula vialii
Prunella
Pycnanthemum (Mountain Mint)
Rudbeckia (Black Eyed Susan)
Salvia (all sages)
Sedum
Senecio aureus (Golden groundsel)
Solidago (Goldenrod)
Thyme

Vernonia (Ironweed)
Veronica

Larval Food Plants for CT Butterflies

Butterfly	Larval Food Plants
Admiral- Red Admiral	Nettles, false nettle (<i>Boehmeria cylindrica</i>), hops
American Copper	Sheep sorrel, curly dock
Azure-Spring Azure	Blueberry, dogwoods, meadowsweet, viburnums, Spirea, black cherry (<i>Prunus serotina</i>)
Blue- Eastern Tailed Blue, Silvery Blue	Clovers, beans, peas, Lespedeza, Lathyrus
Brown-Eyed Brown, Appalachian Brown	Sedge grasses
Buckeye- Common Buckeye	Plantain, snapdragons, stonecrop, <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>
Checkerspot- Baltimore Checkerspot	White turtlehead (<i>Chelone glabra</i>), plantain, white ash
Comma-Eastern Comma Green Comma Gray Comma	Stinging nettles, hops, elms Rhododendron, azalea, birch, willow Currants, gooseberries
Copper- American Copper, Bronze Copper	Sheep sorrel, curly dock
Crescent- Pearly Crescentspot	Asters
Dash- Long Dash, Northern Brook Dash	Grasses
Dogface- Southern Dogface	Baptisia, clovers, lupine, vetch, <i>Amorpha</i>
Duskywing-Dreamy, Juvena's Duskywing Wild Indigo Duskywing	Oaks Baptisia
Emperor- Hackberry Emperor	Hackberry (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
Fritillary-Great Spangled Fritillary Meadow Fritillary Variegated Fritillary	Violets (<i>Viola tricolor</i>) Violets (<i>Viola sororia</i> , <i>V. pallens</i>) Violets, pansies, stonecrops, passionflower
Glassywing- Little Glassywing	Grasses
Hairstreak-Coral Hairstreak Edward's Hairstreak Banded Hairstreak	Cherry, serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier</i>) Oaks Nut trees
Lady- American Lady everlasting, plantain, globe thistle, <i>Verbena</i>	Daisies, pussy toes (<i>Antennaria</i>), pearly (<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>), hollyhock, snapdragon, stonecrop (<i>Sedum</i>), <i>bonariensis</i> , <i>Centaurea</i>

Painted Lady	Mallow family (Malvaceae), thistles, burdock, Vernonia goosefoots (Chenopodium, such as lamb's quarters),
Monarch	Milkweed, Asclepias
Mourning Cloak	Elm, poplar, willow, birch, hackberry, ash
Orangetip- Falcate Orangetip	Mustard family
Question Mark	Hackberry, nettles, hops
Red Spotted Purple willow	Apple, aspen, cherry, hawthorn, hornbeam, poplar,
Ringlet- Common Ringlet	Grasses and rushes
Satyr- Little Wood-Satyr Wisteria,beans	Grasses, Groundnut (Apios Americana),
Skippers- Dun, Hobomok, Tawny Edged, Zabulon, and more	Grasses
Silver Spotted Skipper	Black locust (Robinia), honey locust (Gleditsia)
Snout- American Snout	Hackberry (Celtis spp.)
Sootywing-Common Sootywing	Lambsquarters (Chenopodium album), amaranths (Amaranthus), and cockscomb (Celosia)
Sulphur-Clouded, Common, Orange Sulphur	Clovers, legumes, Lespedeza, Lathyrus, alfalfa, vetch
Swallowtail	
Anise Swallowtail	Anise, parsley, carrot, dill, fennel, rue
Eastern Black Swallowtail	Parsley, carrot, dill, fennel, rue, Queen Anne's lace, lovage
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	Lilac, willow, birch, tuliptree, cherry
Giant Swallowtail	Citrus, rue, hop tree (Ptelea trifoliata), prickly ash (Zanthoxylum americanum)
Pipevine Swallowtail	Dutchman's pipe (Aristolochia)
Spicebush Swallowtail	Spicebush (Lindera benzoin), sassafras
Zebra Swallowtail	Pawpaw
Tailed Blue	Clovers, beans, peas
Tortoiseshell-Compton Tortoiseshell Milbert's Tortoiseshell	Birches, willows, poplars Nettles, willows
Viceroy	Willow, poplar, aspen, apple, cherry, plum
White-Cabbage White	Cabbage family, mustard family, nasturtium

Yellow- Little Yellow

Legumes, clover