

# Attracting Butterflies



Butterflies are not only beautiful visitors to our gardens but great pollinators and important members of our eco-system. To attract butterflies to your garden you need to create a comfortable environment for the whole life cycle of a butterfly from caterpillar to adult. You'll need three basic elements; caterpillar food, butterfly food and a comfortable physical environment.

## Caterpillar Food

Butterflies lay their eggs on plants that will become a food source for the growing caterpillars. Some caterpillars like to eat specific plants. For example, the monarch butterfly feed on milkweed plants and yellow swallowtails eat only parsley. Any damage caused by caterpillars is small and temporary. Many trees, perennials, herbs and vegetables make good caterpillar food

Yarrow  
 Hollyhock  
 Snapdragon  
 Aster  
 Bleeding Heart  
 Foxglove  
 Fennel  
 Sunflower  
 Toadflax  
 Sweet Alyssum  
 Penstemon  
 Veronica  
 Wisteria  
 Strawberry  
 Lilac  
 Hibiscus  
 Currant  
 Roses  
 Spirea  
 Viburnum  
 Potentilla  
 Milkweed  
 Parsley

## Butterfly Food

Butterflies drink nectar, the sweet liquid inside a flower. Butterflies are attracted to bright, fragrant flowers that give them enough room to sit on.

In a sunny area, plant a variety of nectar rich flowers in close clumps to encourage adult butterflies to feed.

Try to have a variety of different flowers with different blooming times to attract a wider variety of butterflies.

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Yarrow            | Oregano        |
| Lilly-Of-The-Nile | Beard Tongue   |
| Snapdragon        | Phlox          |
| Columbine         | Ranunculus     |
| Butterfly Weed    | Rudbeckia      |
| Aster             | Sage           |
| Astilbe           | Scabiosa       |
| Jupiter's Beard   | Sedum          |
| Shasta Daisy      | Marigold       |
| Coreopsis         | Verbena        |
| Cosmos            | Butterfly Bush |
| Delphinium        | Lilac          |
| Dianthus          | Lantana        |
| Echinacea         | Lavendar       |
| Globe Thistle     | Honeysuckle    |
| Gaillardia        | Mahonia        |
| Candytuft         | Mock Orange    |
| Lobelia           | Potentilla     |
| Sweet Alyssum     | Sumac          |
| Bee Balm          | Currant        |
|                   | Rosemary       |
|                   | Spirea         |
|                   | Zinnia         |

## Comfortable Environment

Now that your butterfly visitors have food, they'll want a comfortable place to stay. Most butterflies like some protection from the wind in the form of trees, shrubs or grasses. These are also perfect spots for them to roost on cool, cloudy days. They also like open areas with lots of sun. Many adult male butterflies like to congregate near open, wet, sandy areas or puddles. Scientists don't know the exact reason for these "mud puddle clubs", but they think that the butterflies get important moisture and minerals from the water. A pile of rocks in a sheltered part of the garden also gives butterflies a place to warm up on sunny days.

Maple  
 Apple Trees  
 Willow  
 Butterfly Bush  
 Lantana  
 Lavender  
 Honeysuckle  
 Mexican Feathergrass  
 Dogwood  
 Birch  
 Flowering Crabapple