

Butterfly Garden Background Information

Where to build? You don't need a large expanse of land to build a butterfly garden. The site you choose can be any size; in a window box, hanging planters, or a section of your backyard.

What to plant? Butterflies feed on the nectar of plants, and to attract lots of butterflies you need to provide different types of food plants.

The perfect nectar plant meets three conditions:

- Bright, strong colors – Butterflies are attracted by orange, yellow, purple, red, and pink. The colors lead the butterflies to the nectar but also serve for camouflage. You can also attract butterflies with red and orange sponges with sugar solutions when they find few flowers.
- Fragrance – pungent, sweet and heavy fragrances attract butterflies by day as well as moths at night.
- Every plane needs an airport – blossoms providing a place to land and easy access to nectar are more suitable for butterflies than others. Butterflies cannot “stand” in the air, they need a place to land.

What else does your garden need? Most importantly your garden needs sunlight. The more hours of sunlight in your garden, the longer your butterflies will stay warm enough to find food, mates, and egg-laying sites. The sun's warmth also helps eggs develop more quickly. In the sun, your flowers will bloom sooner and produce more food for caterpillars and adult butterflies. Some shade is important to provide a cool spot for resting from the heat. Also, wind can affect butterfly behavior, therefore some protection is necessary with fences, trees, or bushes. Avoid using pesticides as chemicals that kill pests will kill butterflies too.

How to really enjoy your garden... Make sure you have a good place to watch the butterflies visiting your garden. Butterfly plants in front of a window make the view more valuable throughout the day. Plus when you observe the animals you can find out what they like and dislike, and you can improve your butterfly garden based on your own observations.

Some Suggested Plants to Include as Nectar Sources and (Host Plants)

Alum Root	Great Lobelia
Bee Balm	Ironweed
Bergamot	Joe Pye Weed
Black-Eyed Susan	Purple Coneflower
Blazing Star	Milkweed (Monarch)
Blue Vervain	New England Aster (Pearl Crescent)
Boneset	Rattlesnake Master
Butterfly Weed	Thistle (Painted Lady)
Cardinal Flower	Wild Quinine
Dogbane	