

# CALLAWAY GARDENS HOME HORTICULTURE 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 colors and entertaining antics to your garden display. Use the following techniques to produce a delightful butterfly 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 sunshine.

**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 their color. Groups of flowers are easier for butterflies to locate than isolated plants.

**PLAN FOR CONTINUOUS BLOOM THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON.** Butterflies are active from early spring until late fall. Plant a selection of flowers that will provide nectar throughout the entire growing season (e.g. spring – azaleas, summer – buddleia, fall – chrysanthemums).

**INCLUDE HOST PLANTS IN THE GARDEN DESIGN.** Host plants provide food for caterpillars and lure female butterflies into the garden to lay 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.

# Butterflies and Plants

Butterflies depend on plants in many ways. The most successful butterfly gardens include plants which meet the needs of butterflies during all four stages of their life cycle: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and adult.

After mating, female butterflies search for a specific kind of "host plant" on which to lay eggs. For example, monarchs lay eggs on milkweed, black swallowtails on parsley, and Eastern tiger swallowtails on tulip tree or wild cherry. Some butterflies lay eggs on more than one type of plant while others only use one particular kind of host plant.

In a few days caterpillars emerge from the eggs and begin to eat. Caterpillars are selective eaters and only feed on specific kinds of plants. If the desired plants aren't available, the caterpillars will starve rather than eat another type of vegetation. Usually female butterflies lay eggs on or near the plants their caterpillars prefer to eat. Most butterfly caterpillars feed on native plants and are not considered agricultural or ornamental pests.

In a few weeks when the caterpillars are fully grown, they shed their skin for the final time and change into chrysalises. Inside each chrysalis the body of an adult butterfly is formed. Often chrysalises are attached to plant stems and protected by surrounding vegetation.

After emerging from the chrysalis, the adult butterfly soon begins to search for nectar-rich flowers to feed.

Plants are important to butterflies during each stage of their life cycle. A garden designed with this in mind attracts the largest number and greatest variety of butterfly visitors!

## Plants for a Butterfly Garden

Plants selected from the following lists will be sure-fire hits in your butterfly garden!

### Nectar Sources

#### Shrubs

Azalea  
Butterfly bush  
Glossy abelia  
Lantana  
Trailing lantana

*Rhododendron* spp.  
*Buddleia davidii*  
*Abelia x Grandiflora*  
*Lantana camara*  
*Lantana montevidensis*

#### Perennials

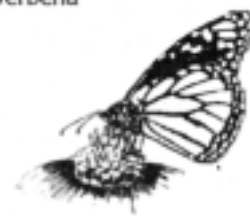
Eupatorium  
New England aster  
Pineapple sage  
Purple coneflower  
Thrift  
Vervain  
Verbena

*Eupatorium* spp.  
*Aster novae-angliae*  
*Salvia rutilans*  
*Echinacea purpurea*  
*Phlox subulata*  
*Verbena bonariensis*  
*Verbena canadensis*

#### Annuals

Cosmos  
Egyptian star-cluster  
French marigold  
Heliotrope  
Impatiens  
Mexican sunflower  
Moss verbena  
Zinnia

*Cosmos sulphureus*  
*Pentas lanceolata*  
*Tagetes patula*  
*Heliotrope arborescens*  
*Impatiens wallerana*  
*Tithonia rotundifolia*  
*Verbena tenuisecta*  
*Zinnia elegans*



### Host Plants

Bloodflower  
Butterflyweed  
Parsley  
Dill  
Copper Fennel  
Maypop  
Blue Passionflower  
Spicebush  
Tulip Tree

*Asclepias curassavica*  
*Asclepias tuberosa*  
*Petroselinum crispum*  
*Anethum graveolens*  
*Foeniculum vulgare 'purpureum'*  
*Passiflora incarnata*  
*Passiflora caerulea*  
*Lindera benzoin*  
*Liriodendron tulipifera*

### Butterflies Attracted

Monarch  
Monarch  
Black Swallowtail  
Black Swallowtail  
Black Swallowtail  
Gulf Fritillary  
Gulf Fritillary  
Spicebush Swallowtail  
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



### References

*Butterflies and Moths— A Golden Guide*. R. T. Mitchell and H. S. Zim. Golden Press, 1987.

*The Audubon Society Handbook for Butterfly Watchers— A Guide to Observing, Identifying, Studying, and Photographing Butterflies*. R. M. Pyle. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.

*The Butterfly Book*. Donald and Lillian Stokes and Ernest Williams. Little, Brown and Company, 1991.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Callaway Gardens, a man-made landscape in a unique natural setting, was conceived and created by Cason J. Callaway and his wife, Virginia Hand Callaway, for the benefit of mankind. The purpose is to provide a wholesome family environment where all may find beauty, relaxation, inspiration and a better understanding of the living world.

Callaway Gardens, a public, educational, horticultural, and charitable organization, is owned and operated by the non-profit Ida Cason Callaway Foundation. Its wholly-owned subsidiary, Callaway Gardens Resort, Inc., a regular business corporation, operates the recreational, lodging, and retail facilities at Callaway Gardens. After-tax proceeds go to the Foundation to support its efforts.



## Callaway Gardens

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