

CREATING A BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Butterflies like a lot of sunlight, so locate your garden in a sunny area.

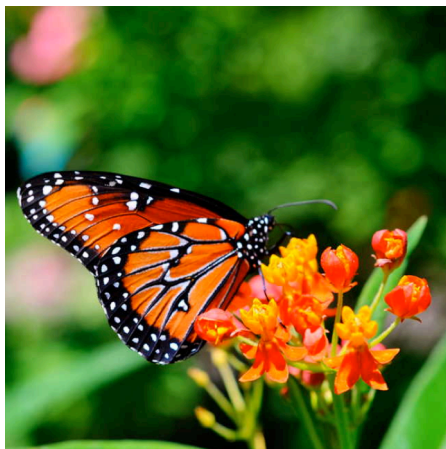
If you live in a windy location, plant your butterfly-attracting plants near a building, fence, or hedge to protect them.

Plant a variety of nectar-rich plants, as well as shrubs and evergreens for shelter. Butterflies can't hover so they need flowers that offer good support for their feet as well as easy access to nectar through shallow tubes.



Since many butterflies and native flowering plants have co-evolved, try to put in some that are native to your area. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center provides lists of plants native to states and regions.

Certain colors are particularly attracting to butterflies – red, yellow, pink, purple, or orange blooms that are clustered or flat-topped, with a short flower tubes are especially attractive to adult butterflies. Butterflies pick up scents and flavors with their feet and antennae.



Avoid using pesticides, especially around nectar-producing plants.

Muddy water hydrates butterflies and gives them minerals necessary for good health. Create a "puddling area" by digging a shallow hole filled with compost or manure where rainwater will collect and release essential salts and minerals or place a bucket filled with wet mud or sand in a bucket-size hole in a sunny location near plants and shrubbery.

Place a rock in a sunny spot nearby for butterfly basking and resting. Butterflies shiver to warm their wings for flight.

If you want butterflies to breed in your garden, put in some caterpillar food plants, such as parsley, milkweeds, asters, thistles, violets, clover, grasses, and Queen Anne's Lace.

Since butterflies need nectar throughout the entire adult phase of their lives, try to create a design that will allow for a continuous bloom – when one stops blooming, another starts.

Monarch Food and Nectar Plants

Blue Cardinal Flower, Bloodflower, Brazilian Verbena, Butterfly Bush, Butterfly Weed, Common Milkweed, Globe Amaranth, Heath Aster, Heliotrope, Joe-Pye Weed, Lantana, Late-flowering Boneset, Marigold, Mist Flower, Mustard Greens, New England Aster, New York Ironweed, Oriental Lilies, Showy Coneflower, Smooth Aster, Swamp Milkweed, Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower), Wingstem, Zinnia

Tips for gardening in particularly hot, dry climates:



1. Water with a drip system whenever possible – soak the bed slowly and thoroughly to a depth of 10" to 12".
2. Watering deeply every 3 to 5 days is preferable to a shallow daily watering.
3. Water in the early morning, so foliage has time to dry.
4. Add a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch or similar material to aid in water retention and help keep the roots cool during hot weather.