
Starting a Butterfly Garden



PLANTING YOUR NEW GARDEN

The best way to get your new butterfly garden started is to begin with several plants that make a good foundation. They should include a few larval plants (milkweed, cassia, passion vine, pipe vine), nectar plants (mistflower, tropical sage, red pentas) and cover plants (native shrubs – including larval plant shrubs - and/or trees for shade and protection).

Once you have a base of plants you can add other plants or begin to seed a mixture of plants. Seed packets usually include a great number of species that provide a variety of needed plants.

To prepare for seeding, cultivate or rake soil to a level but coarse texture. Thoroughly mix seeds from packet with 1-2 quarts of dry sand (for better and more even seed dispersal). Throw handfuls of the seed and sand mix across the planting area. Cover the newly seeded area with pine straw and water completely (keep moist for several days and water regularly until seeded area is maturing).

****When starting your garden it will require extra care until it is established. Keeping the garden moist for butterflies is crucial.**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CREATING A COMPLETE BUTTERFLY HABITAT:

4 Native plants are the best to attract the greatest number of local, native butterfly species. Most species have favorite plants to use for nectar and have specific larval plants for food, and nearly all are local native species for our wide butterfly populations.

4 Butterflies need larval, nectar and cover plants to complete the life cycle. Larval plants provide food for the babies (caterpillars), nectar provides food for adults, and cover plants are required for protection from predators and as a base for the chrysalis/cocoon (metamorphosis stage that transforms caterpillars to the adult butterflies).

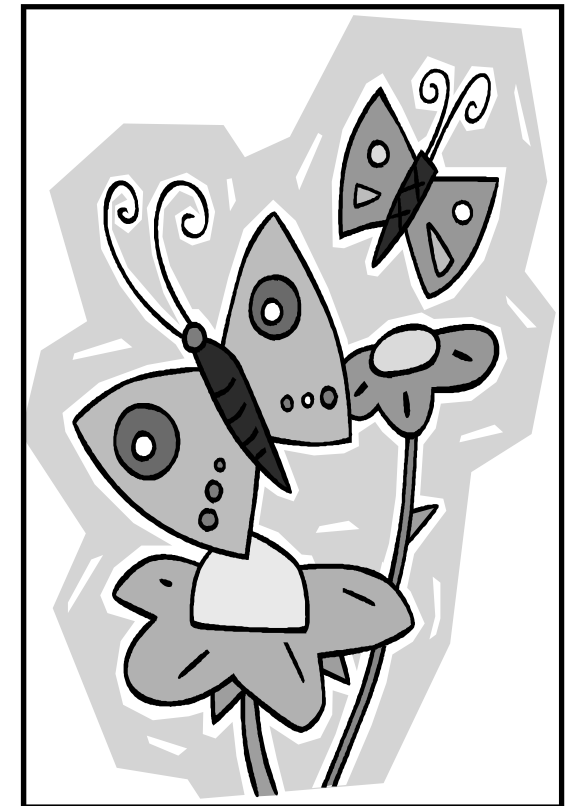
4 Larval plants are supposed to be eaten by caterpillars—they are your future butterflies. No garden is complete without larval species.

4 Pesticides kill your eggs, larva (caterpillars) and adults. To control aphids and other pests, it is best to use a spray of soapy water, or even better natural pest protection like ladybugs & praying mantis.



BUTTERFLY GARDENING IN FLORIDA

Helpful information for starting your own Butterfly Garden



Lee County Manatee Park
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www.leeparks.org

SPECIAL BUTTERFLY & MOTH WORDS:

There are special words that describe butterflies and their life cycle:

OVA = Egg

OVIDEPOSITING = Egg Laying

LARVA = Hatched Egg [a.k.a. caterpillar]

CATERPILLAR = Larval Stage

MOLTS = Shedding of Exoskeleton
[external skeleton or skin]

INSTAR = Stage between Molts
[usually several instars before pupa is formed]

PUPA = Stage between Larva and Adult
[moths and some butterflies spin cocoons with a pupa inside; a naked butterfly pupa is also known as a chrysalis]

CHRYsalis = Naked Butterfly Pupa Stage

METAMORPHOSIS = Process within the Pupa Stage where the Insect Transforms Itself from Caterpillar (larva) to Adult (imago) Butterfly or Moth

IMAGO = Adult Butterfly

Now you are prepared to impress your friends with the butterfly terms you know as you develop your garden!!

INTERESTING BUTTERFLY FACTS

- ⇒ Most butterflies have a very different pattern on the top & bottom sides of wings. The interior is usually brighter to attract a mate and the exterior is usually dull for camouflage use
- ⇒ Butterflies bask in the sun to warm their bodies. They are cold blooded and must raise their body temperature to 80° F to fly. On cold days they may not fly at all.
- ⇒ Many butterfly species are territorial and may fight each other and other species. They don't have weapons to hurt each other but the faster and stronger ones manage to chase the weaker competitors away
- ⇒ Most butterflies have **PROBOSCIS** (*pro-bahs-sis*) a long feeding tube or tongue to sip nectar and water
- ⇒ The only insect with more different species than butterflies is beetles
- ⇒ Butterflies see ultraviolet light which (although invisible to humans) makes many flower markings very striking. Ultraviolet sight also allows butterflies to easily identify their own species when searching for a mate because butterflies have reflective or absorbent ultraviolet markings on their wings that are only visible to other butterflies allowing for visible camouflage marking to fool predators but not mates.

Great Native Butterfly Garden Plants

Wildflowers

Black-eyed Susan (N)
Mistflower (N)
Horsemint (N)
Coreopsis (N)
Gaillardia (N)
Liatris (N)
Red Salvia (N)
Silkgrass (N)
Yellowtop (N)
Ironweed (N)
Milkweed (N,L)
Pennyroyal (N)
Twinflower (N,L)
Butterfly Weed (N,L)

Shrubs

Beautyberry (N)
Cassia (N,L)
Coral Bean (N)
Firebush (N)
Jamaica Caper (N)
Wax Myrtle (N)
Wild Coffee (N)
Myrsine
Cocoplum
Marlberry
Saw Palmetto
Stoppers
Varnish Leaf
Walter's Viburnum

Vines

Corky Stem Passion Flower (L)
Climbing Aster (N)
Coral Honeysuckle (N)
Pipevine (L)

Ground Covers

Coontie (L)
Dune Sunflower (N)
Native Porterweed (N)
Gopher Apple (N)
Golden Creeper (N)
Quail Berry (N)
Railroad Vine (N)

Trees

Fiddlewood (N,L)
Gumbo Limbo (N,L)
Red Bay (N,L)
Willow (N,L)
Wild Lime (N,L)
Wild Tamarind (N)
Dahoon Holly (N)
Cypress
Sabal Palm
Live Oak
Mastic