

Butterfly Gardening

Create a Butterfly Habitat

Creating a habitat for butterflies is easy, exciting and rewarding and can be enjoyed by everyone in your family. Having butterflies in your garden will provide your garden with “active beauty” as you watch them feed while fluttering from bloom to bloom, perching on the many flowing shrubs, annuals and perennials that can be found at Southern Homes and Gardens.

Creating that perfect butterfly habitat incorporates a combination of food and shelter that will give them everything they need for a complete life cycle. Select plants that are diverse in color and bloom at different times, so you will attract butterflies all summer long.

Butterflies are easy to attract; you just have to know what they like to eat. Caterpillars eat "larval" plants like milkweed, marigolds, Queen Anne's lace, and violets. Butterflies like "nectar" plants, like the butterfly bush, the beauty bush, sunflowers, lilacs, snapdragons, and zinnias.

Butterfly Gardening Tips

Grow Lots of Nectar Plants

- Plant a variety of perennials and annuals that will bloom early in the spring and throughout the summer season.
- Cluster each variety in groups.
- Plant different heights of plants.

Grow Caterpillar Food Plants (Host Plants)

- Many larval plants (on which larva feed) are wildflowers and weeds that you will want to plant in a separate area. Butterfly weed, dill, and parsley are good larval plants.
- Do not use pesticides.

Choose a Sunny Location

- Butterflies are cold blooded and need the sun to fly.
- Nectar plants grow well in full sun and well drained soil.
- Rocks and evergreens will absorb heat for basking.

Shelter Your Garden from the Wind

- Shelter from wind can be provided by a row of trees or shrubs, a fence or trellis with honeysuckle or other flowering vine.

Allow For Water

- Create a mud puddle in your garden and occasionally add salt to the water for puddling butterflies such as Swallowtails.

Suggested Plants for Attracting Butterflies

- Perennials -- Aster, Black-eyed Susan, Chrysanthemums, Coreopsis, Dahlias, Daylilies, Lantana, Nasturtium, Phlox, Primrose, Purple Coneflower, Yarrow, Joe-pye-weed.
- Annuals -- Cornflower, Cosmos, Impatiens, Marigolds, Petunia, Sweet William/Pink, Zinnia.
- Shrubs -- Azalea/Rhododendron, Butterfly Bush, Honeysuckle, Lavender, Lilac, Viburnum, Wisteria.