

We are all delighted when the colorful butterflies visit our gardens and flit from one nectar plant to another and we plan our gardens to attract them. In addition to nectar plants; however, a butterfly garden should include host plants: plants that serve as food sources for the butterflies in the caterpillar stage. Over millennia, caterpillars, and many other insects, too, adapted to feeding on a limited number of species of plants that were near where they lived (co-evolution). Many of these plants, referred to as plants native to an area, are disappearing from the natural landscape. Thus, to ensure the survival of our butterflies and to attract more of them to your yard, plan to include a few host plants.

### HOST PLANTS FOR CATERPILLARS OF:

American Painted Lady and Painted Lady	Composites: Thistles; Groundsel ( <i>Senecio</i> ); Sunflowers ( <i>Helianthus spp.</i> ); Sunflower-Tickseed ( <i>Bidens</i> )
Baltimore Checkerspot	White Turtlehead ( <i>Chelone</i> ), Smooth Beardtongue ( <i>Penstemon</i> )
Black Swallowtail	Members of the Carrot Family: Parsley, Queen Anne's Lace, Golden Alexanders ( <i>Zizia</i> )
Buckeye	Plantain ( <i>Plantago</i> ); Stonecrop ( <i>Sedum</i> ), Snapdragon ( <i>Antirrhinum</i> )
Eastern Tailed Blue	Lespedeza; Tick trefoils ( <i>Desmodium canescens</i> and <i>marilandia</i> ); False Indigo ( <i>Baptisia spp.</i> )
Fritillaries, Greater:	Violets ( <i>Viola</i> ), the caterpillars feed at night and hide during the day
Monarch	Milkweed: Butterfly weed ( <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> ); Swamp Milkweed ( <i>A. incarnata</i> ); ( <i>A. syrica</i> ) and others.
Mourning Cloak	Elm ( <i>Ulmus</i> ); Willow ( <i>Salix</i> ); Poplar ( <i>Populus</i> ); Hackberry ( <i>Celtis</i> ); Rose ( <i>Rosa</i> )
Red Admiral	Nettles ( <i>Urtica</i> ); Hops ( <i>Humulus</i> )
Spicebush Swallowtail	Spicebush ( <i>Lindera benzoin</i> ) and Sassafras ( <i>Sassafras albidum</i> )
Spring Azure	Flowering Dogwood ( <i>Cornus</i> ); Bugbane, Fairy Candles ( <i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i> ); Sumac ( <i>Rhus spp.</i> ); Viburnums ( <i>Viburnum</i> ); Blueberries ( <i>Vaccinium spp.</i> )
Sulphurs	Clovers ( <i>Trifolium</i> ) ( <i>Lespedeza</i> ), Vetches ( <i>Vicia</i> ), Heath: Mt. Laurel ( <i>Kalmia</i> ) ; Blueberries ( <i>Vaccinium</i> )
Tiger Swallowtail	Tulip Tree ( <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> ); Birch ( <i>Betula</i> ); Ash ( <i>Fraxinus</i> )
Viceroy	Willows ( <i>Salix spp.</i> ); Poplars and Aspens ( <i>Populus spp</i> ); Plum, Cherry and Apple. Larva feed at night.
Zebra Swallowtail	Pawpaw ( <i>Asimina triloba</i> ) – their only host plant!

## NATIVE PLANTS THAT PROVIDE NECTAR FOR BUTTERFLIES:

### Spring Blooming

Moss Phlox (*Phlox subulata*), Sun, Dry soil - Groundcover  
Creeping Phlox (*P. stolonifera*), Shade-Part Shade, Moist - Groundcover  
Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) – Part.Shade, Dry-Moist, Self Seeds,  
Height. 1', Red/Yellow Blooms  
Wild or Hardy Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) – Sun-Part.Shade, Dry-Moist,  
Lavender-Pink blooms, Ht. 1-2'

### Summer Blooming

Milkweeds (*Asclepias incarnata*, Swamp milkweed likes sun and moist-wet soil and *A. tuberosa*, Butterfly Weed grows in poor dry soil in sun).

Bee Balm, Wild Bergamot (*Monarda didyma* and *fistulosa*) summer blooming, purple, red, Ht. 2-4', spreads by runners, Sun/Part.Shade

Black-Eyed Susan, Orange and Green-Headed Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia spp.*), summer to fall blooming, Ht. 2'-3'.

Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*) Ht. to 3', white – purple blooms, sun, Average Soil.

Bugbane, Fairy Candles (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), tall (to 5') with spikes of white blooms in mid summer, likes moist but well-drained soil, Pt. Shade.

Gayfeather (*Liatris spp.*), summer blooming, white and purple heads attract butterflies, Goldfinches like the seeds in the dried heads.

Mountain Mints (*Pycnanthemum spp.*) Blooms all summer into fall, outstanding for attracting butterflies and pollinators. Blooms aren't spectacular and they do spread vigorously!

Summer Phlox (*P. paniculata*) blooms all summer, magenta, 5' tall, Moist.

Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*) Ht 2'-5', White or pink to purple blooms, dry to moist soil, Sun/PartShade. *P. virginiana* 'Vivid' blooms in late fall and provides an excellent late fall source of nectar for bees and late-migrating Monarchs.

### Late Summer to Fall Blooming

Asters (*Symphyotrichum spp.*) New York, New England, Purple Stemmed (all fall blooming), Ht. to 3', colors shades of purple, Av.-Moist soil.

Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*), fall blooming, yellow, Ht. from 1'-5'. Wide range of growing conditions. Usually full sun to part shade, average soil.

*Lobelia*, Cardinal Flower, red, and Great Lobelia, blue, late summer blooming, Ht. to 3', also attract Hummingbirds.

Joe Pye Weeds, (*Eutrochium (Eupatorium) fistulosum, maculatum, purpureum* and *dubium*) grow in wet spots but tolerate drier conditions. 7-10' tall, late summer-fall blooming with giant airy pink heads.

New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) grows to 6' with red-violet blooms mid to late summer, likes moist to wet soil, part shade.

Sunflowers-Woodland and Tickseed (*Helianthus* and *Bidens*), grow to 5' tall, late summer blooming, yellow. Host for American Painted Lady Butterflies.

White Turtlehead (*Chelone*) grows to 5' in moist to wet soil, Sun/Part Shade, fall

blooming. Host for Baltimore Checkerspot.

### Native Shrubs

Summersweet, Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) - mid-summer blooms.

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), likes moist to wet soil, grows to 10' or more, white puffy blooms in late spring.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) small woodland shrub, blooms early spring, Host for Spicebush Swallowtail.

Butterfly Bushes (*Buddleja spp.*) They excel as butterfly and bee magnets and bloom from early spring to late fall; however, the nectar they produce is high in sucrose and does not provide other nutrients essential to the health of the pollinators. The seeds are easily dispersed by the wind, and plants are being found in coastal forest edges, roadsides, stream and river banks, etc. If you must grow them, plant them near your house where you can monitor them, keep them deadheaded before seeds can set and disperse, and pull or cut any new plants. Keep them away from wooded areas and the edges of your property where they can spread. Late-migrating Monarchs sometimes lay their eggs on Butterfly Bushes, dooming the caterpillars to death by starvation because the bushes do not provide proper nutrition. Monarch caterpillars eat only milkweed (*Asclepias spp.*) so plant some nearby!

### **BUTTERFLY WEBSITES AND BOOKS:**

[www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org) National Butterfly organizations with good links  
[http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2017-049\\_Mid-AtlanticPlantList\\_Dec2017\\_web-3page.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2017-049_Mid-AtlanticPlantList_Dec2017_web-3page.pdf) Xerces Society list of Pollinator Plants for Mid-Atlantic Region

Butterflies through Binoculars: The East (Field Guide), Jeffrey Glassberg, Oxford University Press.

Caterpillars in the Field and Garden (Field Guide to butterfly caterpillars of N. America) by Allen, Brock & Glassberg, Oxford University Press.

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