

Butterflies.

The mere mention of these colorful visitors to our gardens each year draws excited chatter from young and old alike. And when we see a new or “different” butterfly, we often spend time watching, photographing and maybe even holding these delicate gems.

Sometimes watching what happens to come by just isn't enough though. Is there something more you could do to attract and provide for more of nature's wonders?

Developing a garden specifically for butterflies is easy, entertaining and can provide hours of enjoying the colorful acrobatic jewels. This brochure will help with selecting the plants, choosing the location and creating the garden.

Why a Butterfly Garden?

Like all other life, butterflies have specific needs that we call “habitat.” While nature stores will sell butterfly feeders, these should be used only as a supplement to a well-planted, carefully crafted garden that provides not only food for these insects, but also shelter and moisture needed for their survival.

The colorful plants the butterflies use for food will also provide entertainment and comfort for you around your home.

Butterfly Quick Tips

- Know what is likely in your area and provide for their needs
- Choose native plants – they will be best for the butterflies and for you
- Advertise – think color
- Grow plants for the caterpillars – you are ensuring the next generation of butterflies
- Puddling areas will be attended by males
- Sun is critical to butterfly survival

Butterfly Events in Texas

Texas Butterfly Festival – Mission, Texas
www.texasbutterfly.com

For More Information

An Introduction To Butterfly Watching by Mike Quinn and Mark Klym, published by TPWD.

Texas Wildscapes; Gardening for Wildlife by Noreen Damude and Kelly Bender published by UT Press.

www.texasento.net



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SO YOU WANT A

Butterfly Garden

Quick Tips on Attracting and Maintaining Butterflies in your Texas Garden



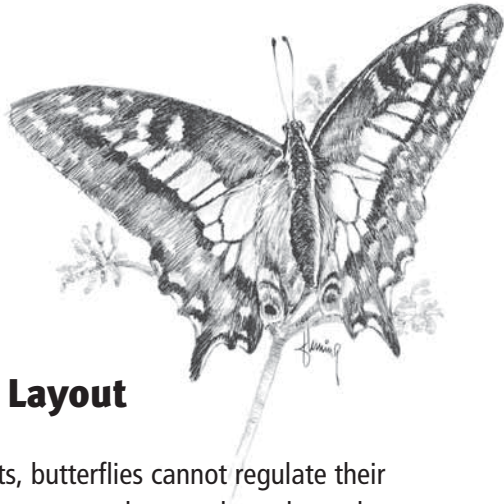
Your Garden Layout

Being insects, butterflies cannot regulate their body temperature, so they need to rely on the sun and other external sources of heat to maintain their metabolism. This means that places to roost where they can “bask” in the sun will be very important to the butterfly.

While the needs of the plant will dictate where the plant should be grown, if there is a choice between sun and shaded locations, sun is going to be the preference.

Keep all stages of the insect’s life in mind. Plants for the caterpillars will probably be kept in less conspicuous locations, so the garden looks neat. Structures to pupate on will be important as the caterpillar matures – while they do get “wander lust” just before entering the chrysalis, you do not want them wandering far. These should be relatively high, safe and dry locations.

Islands of color or clusters of nectar plants throughout the garden area will usually be more effective than one large patch. Larger concentrated areas of color will collect the butterflies into a single area for your enjoyment. Use the technique that works best for you.

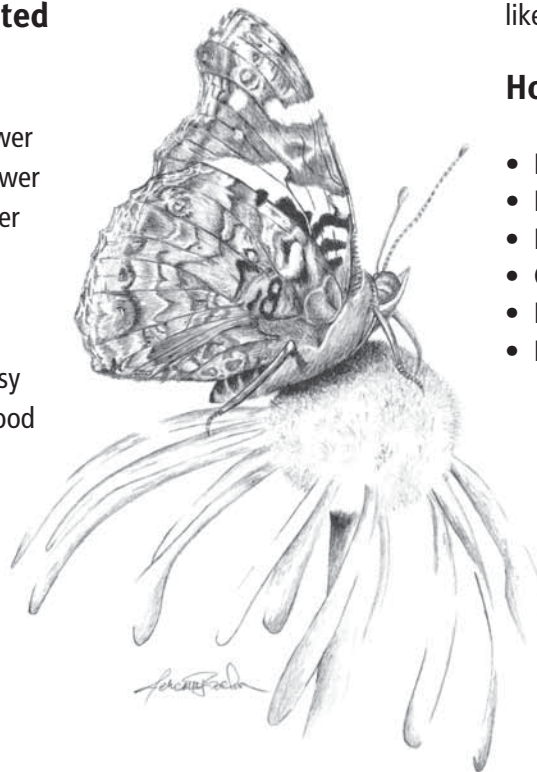


Butterflies and Nectar

Butterflies are called “pollinators” meaning that they are one of the animals that assist in plant reproduction by carrying pollen from plant to plant. This is unintentional on the part of the butterfly though – they are visiting the plant not for pollen, but for the sweet drops of nectar – sugar water – that the plant produces as a lure for the insects. In planning your garden, you are going to want plants that will provide this nectar. They should be colorful, to attract the butterfly and oriented upward making a platform for the butterfly to land and walk on. The best of these generally have big “heads” of flowers, so that the butterfly may spend several minutes visiting from flower to flower without flying.

Some Suggested Nectar Plants

- Purple Coneflower
- Gregg’s Mistflower
- White Mistflower
- Indian Blanket
- Gayfeather
- Frostweed
- Golden Eye Daisy
- Texas Kidneywood
- Horsemint
- Elbowbush
- Turk’s Cap
- Phlox
- Texas Lantana
- Bee Brush



Don’t Forget the Nursery

While we love butterflies, many gardeners despise caterpillars, and the two sentiments are not complimentary. Without the caterpillars, we eventually do not have the butterflies.

Caterpillars are very specific about what they will eat though – often to the point of feeding only on one family of plants. A person familiar with butterflies and their “host plants” can often identify the insect causing the damage by identifying the plant that was damaged.

In creating our garden, we will want some plants that will be eaten by the caterpillars, which will then become our entertaining butterflies. Insecticides, even those to control caterpillars, like BT, should be used sparingly.

Host Plants

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| • Monarchs | milkweed |
| • Fritillaries | passion vines |
| • Black Swallowtail | parsley |
| • Giant Swallowtail | citrus |
| • Pipevine Swallowtail | pipevine |
| • Hackberry Emperor | hackberry |

What About Moisture?

While butterflies do not drink from birdbaths or other water features, a mud puddle will be visited by males. Consider a puddling area.