



Attracting Butterflies to Your Backyard, Schoolyard, Workplace, or Community Wildlife Habitat

The first step in attracting lively and colorful adult butterflies is planting flowers with nutritious nectar. The plants provide enticing food and, in return, are pollinated by visiting butterflies. Native plants are the best choice. Adults searching for nectar are attracted to red, yellow, orange, pink, or purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes. This allows the butterflies to reach the nectar with their tongues.

Nectar-producing plants should be grown in sunny areas that are protected from strong winds. Butterflies need sun for orientation and to warm their wings for flight. Calm breezes allow them to fly freely.

The adult life span averages 6 to 20 days, with the range from a few days to over six months. In temperate regions of the country, various species are active from early spring until late fall, while some butterfly species in the south are active year-round. Butterflies need nectar throughout the adult phase of their life span, so be sure to plant for continuous bloom.

Nectar Plants:

Aster spp.	Ironweed (<i>Vernonia</i> spp.)
Azaleas (<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.)	Joe-pye-weeds (<i>Eupatorium</i> spp.)
Bergmots (<i>Monarda</i> spp.)	Milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.)
Black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)	Phlox spp.
Blazing Stars (<i>Liatris</i> spp.)	Pickeralweed (<i>Pontederia cordata</i>)
Butterfly-weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	Purple Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)
Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>)	Sumacs (<i>Rhus</i> spp.)
Cardinal-flower (<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>)	Sunflowers (<i>Helianthus</i> spp.)
Ceanothus spp.	Sweet Pepperbush (<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>)
Coreopsis spp.	Verbena spp.
Goldenrods (<i>Solidago</i> spp.)	

Caterpillar Food Sources

In order to insure that butterflies reside in your yard, include host plants that serve as larval food. Butterflies almost invariably lay their eggs on the host plant preferred by the caterpillar. Do not panic when you see chewed foliage; usually no permanent damage is done to the plants. Some butterflies common to SC and their food plants are:

American Lady- cudweeds, everlasts, antennarias
Banded Hairstreak- oaks, hickory, walnut
Black Swallowtail- parsley, dill, fennel, Queen Anne's lace, common rue
Buckeye- ruellia, snapdragon, plantain, verbena, toadflax, monkeyflower
Cabbage White- many plants in mustard family and nasturtium
Checkered White- peppergrass, winter cress, bladderpods, tumble mustards

Checkered Skipper- mallows, sida, globe mallows, hollyhock, velvet-leaf
 Clouded Sulphur- clovers
 Common Sooty-wing- lamb's quarters, amaranth tumbleweed
 Common Wood-nymph-grasses
 Coral Hairstreak- wild black cherry, American and Chickasaw plum, black chokeberry
 Dogface- lead plant, indigo bush, prairie clover, false indigo
 Dream Dusky Wing- willows, poplar, aspen, and birch
 Dun Skipper- sedges, grasses including purpletop
 Easter Tailed Blue- clover, trefoils, peas, vetches, alfalfa
 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail- wild black cherry, ash, tulip tree, willow, sweetbay, basswood
 Field Crescent- asters
 Fiery Skipper- Bermuda grass, St. Augustine grass, bluegrass
 Giant Swallowtail- prickly ash, citrus, common rue, hoptree, gas plant, torchwood
 Gray Comma- gooseberry, azalea, elm
 Gray Hairstreak- many pea and mallow family members, many others
 Great Purple Hairstreak- mistletoe, Phoradendron flavescens
 Great Spangled Fritillary- violets
 Gulf Fritillary- maypops, other passion vines
 Hackberry Butterfly- hackberry, sugarberry, Celtis spp.
 Henry's Elfin- redbud, American, dahoon and yaupon hollies, maple-leaved viburnum, blueberries
 Hoary Edge- tick trefoils, false indigo, lespedezas
 Least Skipperling- grasses including cutgrass, bluegrass
 Little Copper- sheep sorrel, curled dock
 Little Wood Satyr- grasses including orchard grass, centipede grass and St. Augustine grass
 Long-tailed Skipper- wisteria, pole beans, tick trefoil, butterfly pea, hog peanut
 Monarch- milkweeds
 Mourning Cloak- willows, American elm, quaking aspen, paper birch, hackberry
 Painted Lady (Cosmopolite)- thistles, mallows, nievitas, yellow fiddleneck
 Pearl Crescent- asters
 Pipe-vine swallowtail- Dutchman's pipe, wooly pipevine, Virginia snakeroot
 Pygmy Blue- saltbush, lamb's quarters, pigweed
 Question Mark- elm, hackberry, nettles, hops
 Red Admiral/ White Admiral- wild cherries, black oaks, aspens, yellow and black birch
 Roadside Skipper- bluegrass, oats, Bermuda grass
 Sagem- grasses, including Bermuda grass
 Spring Azure- dogwoods, wild black cherry, viburnums, staghorn, sumac, others
 Sulphurs- clover, peas, vetch, alfalfa, asters, Cassia spp.
 Sylvan Hairstreak- willows
 Tawny Emperor- hackberry, sugarberry
 Variegated Fritillary- passion flower, maypop, violets, stonecrop, purslane
 Viceroy- willows, cottonwood, aspen
 Woodland Skipper- grasses
 Zebra- passion vines
 Zebra Longwing Swallowtail- pawpaw