

Butterfly Gardening

In addition to being able to enjoy the beauty of butterflies, creating a habitat that will attract them has many benefits. Other good insects, such as predators and parasites of garden pest insects also utilize the flowers, feeding on nectar and pollen. Early flowers may attract bees and hold them in the area until the fruit trees bloom.

Butterflies are attracted to all types of flowers. They prefer those with flat surfaces or large petals, which make perching easier. Flowers with clustered florets attract more butterflies than single flowers. You will find most butterflies in open sunny areas that are protected from the wind. To keep butterflies well fed throughout the growing season, plant a variety of shrubs, trees, grasses and flowers that bloom from early spring through late summer.

The butterfly gardener must become a wise pest manager. Identify pests accurately and select or use pest management methods that will do the job with minimum damage to beneficial insects in the garden. Below are some key points about butterfly gardening.

Needs of Butterflies

1. Nectar-producing flowers
2. Shrubs for protection
3. Rotting meat or fruit, tree sap, or animal droppings
4. Larval food plants
5. Sunny spaces (large or small)
6. Wet mud

Nectar Sources

Yellow alyssum	Lavender
Beebalm; wild bergamot; Oswego tea	Lilac
Black-eyed Susan	Marigold
Butterfly weed	Mint and many other herbs
Butterfly bush	Pincushion flower
Ceanothus	Sneezeweed
Chrysanthemum (single-flowered)	Blue spirea
Composites such as dandelion, aster	Statice
Cow parsnip	Thistles
Michaelmas daisy	Toadflax
New England daisy	Verbena
Fleabane	Zinnia
Honeysuckle	

Butterflies of the Puget Sound Region

Anise or mountain swallowtail	Milbert's tortoiseshell	Satyr anglewing
Brown elfin	Mourning cloak butterfly	Spring azure
Cabbage white	Mylitta crescent spot	Silvery blue
California tortoiseshell	Ochre ringlet	Veined white
Clodius Parnassian	Painted lady	Painted lady
Faunus anglewing	Pine white	Western tiger swallowtail
Gray hairstreak	Purplish copper	West coast lady
Lorquin's admiral	Red admiral	Woodland skipper
	Sara's orange tip	

Larval Food Plants

Anise swallowtail: Lomatium *, fennel, caraway, dill, cow parsnip

Cabbage white: cabbage family*, nasturtium

California tortoiseshell: Ceanothus *

Lorquin's admiral: apple, cottonwood, poplar, spiraea, and willow

Milbert's tortoiseshell: aster*, helianthella, nettle and willow

Mourning cloak butterfly: birch, elm, hackberry, nettle, pear, poplar, rose, and willow

Painted lady: borage, centaurea, burdock, globe artichoke

Pine white: pine, Douglas-fir

Red admiral: nettle, false nettle (Boehmeria), hop

Spring azure: Black snakeroot, crowsbeard, dogwood, spiraea, vaccinium, viburnum and verbena

West Coast lady: hollyhock, groundsel, nettles, pearly everlasting, sagebrush, sunflower, thistles*, and wormwood

Western tiger swallowtail: alder, cherry, cottonwood, elm, maple, poplar, and willow

*also a nectar plant