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Pocket Field Guide - Landscaping for Wildlife: The Butterfly Garden



Eastern Swallowtail

Butterflies

Butterflies are some of the most beautiful and interesting creatures on Earth. A butterfly garden is an easy way to see more butterflies and to help them, since many natural butterfly habitats have been lost to human activities like building homes, roads and farms. It is easy to increase the number and variety of butterflies in your yard. Simply grow the plants the caterpillars like to eat, and plants that adult butterflies feed on! Butterfly gardens can be any size - a window box, part of your landscaped yard, or even a wild untended area on your property.

Creating a butterfly garden should start with research to learn which kinds of butterflies are native to your area. This field guide lists some of the most common butterflies found in Kentucky.



Red-spotted Purple Butterfly

Make a list of all of the different kinds of butterflies you would like to attract, and then check in this booklet to learn which flowers and plants they both feed on and lay eggs on.

All of the plants listed in this guidebook will certainly be native to your area and therefore easy to grow with the right conditions and care. Adult butterflies will visit for a longer period if they find plants to lay their eggs on. These are called 'Host Plants'.

Once you have done your research and know which kinds of plants you need, you should learn about the plants and flowers. What do they look like? How tall do they grow? What conditions do they thrive in? "[The Homeowner's Guide to Native Plants, Integrated Pest Management, and Pollution Prevention](#)", includes an entire section about designing native plant gardens.

To receive a copy of the guidebook on disk, you may contact the Louisville Water Company, at the address in the back of this booklet. By using this guidebook, you can get a pretty good idea how your Butterfly Garden will look when it is planted.

You can add some butterfly garden accessories like a [Butterfly House](#), which has slots the ideal size for keeping birds out while

Fun Butterfly Facts

How long do butterflies live?

There is an average life span of a butterfly - it is usually about one month. Although the smallest butterflies that you can usually spot feasting on the flowers in your front yard will usually only live about one week, Monarchs have a longer life span.

Do butterflies migrate?

Have you heard of the Monarch butterfly migration? Well, other butterflies migrate too! There are many other species of butterflies that also migrate. For example, the American Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Red Admiral, Cloudless Sulphur, Skippers, Satchems, and Question Mark, and are all butterflies that migrate as well.

Monarch butterflies are not able to survive the cold winters of most of the United States so they migrate south and west each autumn to escape the cold weather. The monarch migration usually starts in about October of each year, but can start earlier if the weather turns cold sooner than that. Monarchs from Kentucky will winter in Mexico.



Monarch butterflies that live in Kentucky migrate to Mexico for the winter.



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under Wellhead Protection

The final form of basking is known as reflectance and this is used when the butterfly want to reflect the sunlight to their body versus just their wings. Usually, the butterfly's body is much darker than their wings, so it makes since for them to reflect the sunlight to their body versus their wings sometimes.

Puddling - The three P's in butterfly behavior are puddling, patrolling and perching. First and foremost, puddling is when quite a few butterflies congregate at the wet edge of sandy areas or mud puddles. Since flowers are butterflies main source of food, there is not a lot of nutrients in flower nectar. Puddling is when males (mostly) get together and feast on extra salts and other nutrient found in the water around sand. These nutrients are then passed through the male's sperm when they mate and the female uses these same nutrients to reproduce.

The patrolling and perching activities all have to do with mating. Usually, the male butterflies will seek out the female butterflies. This act is called patrolling and while butterflies do not have sharp vision, when a male spots a female that he may want to mate with, he swoops down on the perched female. .



Male butterflies puddle to drink extra nutrients from sand and soil.

If the female is indeed of the male's species, this is where the courting ritual comes into play.

Now, not all of the butterfly species go through the patrolling ritual, the Black Swallowtail and the Red Admiral are just two of the butterflies that 'perch' instead. Instead, they will perch themselves on tall plants right along a stream or a ridge. The males will wait for the females to come and as soon as these perched males spots one of the females, he will begin his courtship.

giving butterflies protection from the wind and weather, and are beautiful garden decorations. You could offer an additional [nectar source](#) close by to supplement your flowers. By providing both the food and shelter butterflies need you can prolong the butterfly's stay in your garden and draw in others.

Once you have designed and started your butterfly garden, you can be proud that you have made a habitat for butterflies in your own yard, which helps with the conservation of the many species of quickly disappearing butterflies today. You will certainly want to place your favorite outdoor furniture near so that you can enjoy all of your visitors day after day.





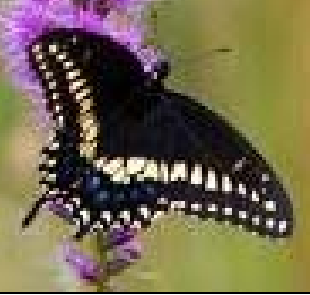





Butterfly House

*From <http://www.TheButterflySite.com>

One of the biggest things that you need to remember when you are attempting to attract butterflies to your backyard is that you need to have a lot of different flowers for them to choose from. This way, you will definitely be attracting more than one type of butterfly. A great addition to any butterfly garden is rocks as well, this gives a great place for all of the butterflies to stop and rest their wings. Another great idea is to group the same types of flowers together; this will ensure that the butterflies will have easy access to their favorite flowers.

What kind of butterflies can you expect to visit your yard? Kentucky has many species of butterflies that are sighted within the state's borders. This booklet will help you identify some of the most common butterflies found in the state, as well as some of the nectar bearing plants that they prefer, and a variety of plants where butterflies lay their eggs. Since the booklet was developed as a part of an educational series pertaining to native plants and wildlife, the flowers and trees listed here are native species.

Pocket Field Guide to Kentucky's Butterflies

	
American Painted Lady	American Snout
	
Black Swallowtail	Cabbage White
	
Carolina Satyr	Clouded Sulphur
	
Cloudless Sulphur	Common Buckeye

More information about these native plants is available in SRAG 200 Pocket Field Guide to Kentucky's Wildflowers. To obtain a copy of this publication, please contact:



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One very important thing to remember when gardening for butterflies, don't use pesticides. There are many cultural controls for pests that may be used instead of pesticides that won't harm butterflies. Some of these are listed in SRAG _____. You can obtain a copy of this booklet by contacting the Louisville Water Company, as listed above.

Butterfly Behavior

Basking - Butterflies are cold-blooded creatures, so many times, in the butterfly garden, you can see them basking in the sun. Butterflies fly at their very best when the air temperatures range from seventy-five to ninety degrees. The reason for this is that they do not have to stop and warm their wings. If the winds are cooler, you will often see many butterflies perched on flowers or leaves in the sun, usually laying them flat down and facing upward at the sun so they can get the best exposure. This is not the only type of basking that butterflies do, there are a few more.

The most common basking for the Satyrs and the Sulphurs is basking with their wings folded and facing the sun. This is usually because the underbelly of their wings is darker; therefore it absorbs more heat when the wings are folded.










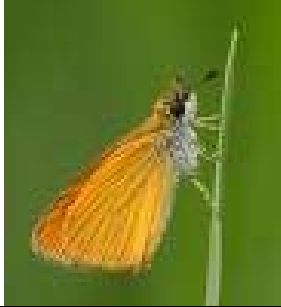
Butterflies bask in the sun to warm their wings.









Gemmed Satyr	Native Grasses
Great Spangled Fritillary	Violets
Grey Hairstreak	Round-headed Bush Clover, Rose Mallow
Hackberry Emperor	Hackberry tree
Least Skipper	Native Grasses
Little Wood Satyr	Native Grasses
Monarch	Milkweed
Orange Sulphur	Wild Blue Indigo, Wild White Indigo, Cream False Indigo, White False Indigo
Painted Lady	Mallow, Thistle, Sunflower
Pearl Crescent	Asters
Pipevine Swallowtail	Pipevine* *non-native species
Question Mark	Nettle, Hackberry, Elms
Red Admiral	Nettle, Elm
Sachem Skipper	Native and Lawn Grasses
Silver-spotted Skipper	Locust trees, Wild Blue Indigo, Wild White Indigo, Cream False Indigo, White False Indigo
Spicebush Swallowtail	Ash tree, Sassafras tree, Tulip tree
Spring Azure	Dogwood, Carolina Chokecherry
Tawny Emperor	Elm, Hackberry Elm
Variegated Fritillary	Maypop, Mayapple, Violets, Purslane, Sedum
Viceroy	Willow, Poplar, Apple
Zebra Swallowtail	Pawpaw

Many wildflowers that are native to Kentucky, and the surrounding states, are very attractive as food for butterflies. While most butterflies have a preference for a specific food, many native wildflower species will produce nectar that attract all butterflies to the garden.



Arrow-leafed Aster

	
Eastern Tailed Blue	Eastern Comma
	
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	Gemmed Satyr
	
Great Spangled Fritillary	Great Hairstreak
	
Hackberry Emperor	Least Skipper

	
Little Wood Satyr	Monarch
	
Orange Sulphur	Painted Lady
	
Pearl Crescent	Pipevine Swallowtail
	
Question Mark	Red Admiral









Silver-spotted Skipper	Black-eyed Susan, Verbena, Milkweed, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Joe Pye Weed, Mints, Mistflowers, Phlox, Coneflowers, Verbena, Boneset, Purple Coneflower
Spicebush Swallowtail	Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Blazing Stars, Mistflower, New England Aster, Ironweed, Phlox, Purple Coneflower, Tickseed Sunflower, Verbena, Wild Bergamot
Spring Azure	Many different flowers
Tawny Emperor	Rotting Fruit, dung, Hackberry Elm trees
Variiegated Fritillary	Milkweeds, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Mints, Tickseed Sunflower
Viceroy	Rotting fruit, tree sap, Asters, Goldenrods, Milkweeds
Zebra Swallowtail	Many different flowers

Butterfly Host Plants are a very important part of the butterfly garden. Host Plants provide a place for the female butterfly to lay her eggs, as well as food for the larvae, (caterpillar). The table below lists common butterflies of Kentucky and their preferred host plants.

Pocket Guide to Host Plants for Specific Butterflies

American Painted Lady	Sunflowers, Burdock, Ironweed,
American Snout	Hackberry tree
Black Swallowtail	Dill, Parsley, Fennel, Carrot* *non-native species
Cabbage White	Mustard Family
Carolina Satyr	Native Grasses
Clouded Sulphur	Alfalfa, Clover*, Purple Prairie Clover, Round-headed Bush Clover *non-native species
Cloudless Sulphur	Wild Senna, Thistles, Morning Glories* *non-native species
Common Buckeye	Plantains, Verbena, Monkeyflower, Wild Petunia, Culver's Root
Eastern-tailed Blue	Round-headed Bush Clover, Virginia Lespedeza
Eastern Comma	Hackberry Elm
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	Sycamore, Willow trees

Clouded Sulphur	Verbena, Mistflower, New England Aster, Purple Coneflower
Cloudless Sulphur	Thistles
Common Buckeye	Asters, Milkweeds, Coreopsis
Eastern-tailed Blue	Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Asters, Mistflowers, Coneflowers, Boneset
Eastern Comma	Rotting fruit and tree sap, Dandelion
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	Cardinal Flower, Milkweeds, Daisy Fleabane, Indian Hemp/Dogbane
Gemmed Satyr	Native Grasses
Great Spangled Fritillary	Milkweeds, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Boneset, Purple Coneflower, Swamp Milkweed
Grey Hairstreak	Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Asters, Boneset, Blazing Star, Mints, Sedums, Coneflowers, Tickseed Sunflower
Hackberry Emperor	Rotten fruit, dung, tree sap, carrion
Least Skipper	Wood sorrel, Verbena
Little Wood Satyr	Tree sap, aphid honeydew
Monarch	Milkweeds, Goldenrods, Thistles, Ironweeds, Mints, Joe Pye Weed
Orange Sulphur	Black-eyed Susan, Verbena, Asters, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, New England Aster, Ironweed, Purple Coneflower
Painted Lady	Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Milkweeds, Boneset, New England Aster, Purple Coneflower, Mistflower, Goldenrods
Pearl Crescent	Black-eyed Susan, Daisy Fleabane, Asters, Boneset, Mistflower, New England Aster, Sedum, Coneflowers, Stiff Goldenrod, Tickseed Sunflower
Pipeline Swallowtail	Verbena
Question Mark	Nettles, Elms
Red Admiral	Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Mistflower
Sachem Skipper	Black-eyed Susan, Milkweeds, Daisy Fleabane, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Blazing Stars, Mints, Mistflower, Phlox, Sedum, Coneflowers, Stiff Goldenrod, Verbena

	
Sachem Skipper	Silver Spotted Skipper
	
Spicebush Swallowtail	Spring Azure
	
Tawny Emperor	Variegated Fritillary
	
Viceroy	Zebra Swallowtail

Native Plants for Butterflies

Creating a Butterfly Garden involves planning your garden to attract, retain, and encourage butterfly populations to visit. You should select a variety of nectar-producing plants (butterfly food plants) with the goal of providing flowers in bloom throughout the season. This will encourage a continuous succession of new visitors to your butterfly garden. It is especially important to have flowers in mid to late summer, when most butterflies are active. Flowers with multiple florets that produce abundant nectar are ideal.

While there may be a lot of different butterfly nectar plants available, there are a few of these nectar-bearing plants that are at the top of the list for attracting butterflies. The top three nectar bearing food plants that butterflies love are *Coneflowers*, *New England Asters* and *Milkweed*.

Butterfly Host Plants are important when you create your butterfly garden to provide a site for the butterfly to lay eggs and also food source for the emerging caterpillar. *Be prepared for heavy munching on your host plants!*



Many caterpillars are well-camouflaged to prevent predation.

Because tiny caterpillars cannot travel far to find their own food, the female butterfly locates and lays her eggs on only the type of plant that the caterpillar can use as food. Most species of caterpillars are particular about the type of plants they can eat. If the egg was not placed on the correct plant, the caterpillar hatching from that egg will not survive.

Many gardeners do not like to see plants in their gardens that have been chewed on by bugs. To avoid this, you may want to locate your butterfly host plants in areas that are not highly visible, but still a short distance from the butterfly nectar plants. If you do not provide host plants, you will have fewer butterflies. If 'chewed' plants look unsightly, you can always wear gloves, and carefully move the caterpillar to a less noticeable portion of the

plant. Butterflies also like rocks or wide-open spaces where they can land and sun themselves when it is warm out. Males of many species like to 'puddle'—congregate in a group around a puddle. Try burying a cake pan in the soil up the brim, fill it with sand or pebbles, and fill it with water. This allows ample space for 'puddling' and allows the butterflies to drink water at their leisure.

Butterfly eyes are large and compound, enabling them to see in all directions. Like most insects, they are near-sighted, so are more attracted to stands of a particular flower, rather than a single plant.



A butterfly's eyes are compound.

While butterflies do not see the color red as we do, they can see polarized light, which tells the direction of the sun, as well as ultraviolet light. They can also see the colors green and yellow. Butterflies also have a very well developed sense of smell from their antennae, which are club-shaped.

Many native trees and other plants found in and around our yards are host plants for caterpillars, as well as food plants. Most butterflies have a preference for several kinds of nectar. Some of these are listed below:

Pocket Guide to Nectar Producing Native Plants for Specific Butterflies

American Painted Lady	Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Milkweeds, Boneset, New England Aster, Purple Coneflower, Mistflower, Goldenrods
American Snout	Rotting fruit, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Dogwood, Aster, Goldenrods
Black Swallowtail	Milkweeds, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Purple Coneflower, Wild Bergamot
Cabbage White	Daisy Fleabane, Indian Hemp/Dogbane, Asters, Boneset, Blazing Stars, Mints, Mistflower, Sedum, Tickseed Sunflower
Carolina Satyr	Rotting fruit, tree sap