

The Cockrell Butterfly Center Guide to Butterfly Gardening in Houston

It is easy to attract butterflies to your home garden by providing them with a few simple needs. If you have a sunny sheltered spot in your yard, try planting a few of these favorite nectar sources for adult butterflies. Most are readily available at local nurseries. Remember that big masses of color are more attractive to butterflies than scattered small clumps. Don't forget to provide a little pool of water for the butterflies; a birdbath works too!

NECTAR PLANTS FOR BUTTERFLIES

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	FLOWER COLOR
Asters	<i>Aster</i> spp.*	Pink, purple, lavender, white
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia</i> spp.*	Yellow
Blazing star	<i>Liatris</i> spp.*	Lavender
Butterfly bush	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Purple, lavender, white
Butterfly weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> *	Yellow
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> *	Cream
Cone flower, Purple cone flower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> *	Dark pink
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> *	Yellow, orange
Flame bush	<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Red-orange (good for hummingbirds, too!)
Golden dewdrop	<i>Duranta repens</i>	Lavender
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> spp.*	Yellow
Ironweed	<i>Vernonia</i> spp.*	Purple, pink
Jatropha, Peregrina	<i>Jatropha integerrima</i>	Red, pink
Joe Pye weed	<i>Eupatorium</i> spp.*	Pink, blue, lavender, white
Lantana	<i>Lantana horrida</i> , <i>L. montevidensis</i> , <i>Lantana</i> spp.*; †	Yellow, orange, white, pink, lavender, and combinations
Mexican flame-vine	<i>Senecio confusus</i>	Orange
Mexican heather	<i>Cuphea hyssopifolia</i>	Lavender
Mexican milkweed	<i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	Red-orange and yellow
Mexican sunflower	<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	Orange
Mist flower	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i> *	Blue
Pentas, Star cluster, Egyptian star flower	<i>Pentas lanceolata</i>	Red, pink, lavender, white
Phlox	<i>Phlox</i> spp.*	Purple, pink, red, white
Pink candle celosia	<i>Celosia cristata</i>	Pink and white
Porter weed	<i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	Purple, blue, coral
Salvia (some species)	<i>Salvia</i> spp.*	Red, pink, lavender, blue
Verbena	<i>Verbena</i> spp. (several species available)*	Purple, lavender, blue, red, pink, white
Zinnia	<i>Zinnia elegans</i>	Yellow, orange, red, pink, white

*is a native or genus includes native species

†*Lantana camara* also works, but is considered an invasive.

Female butterflies are at least as interested in finding a place to lay their eggs as they are in finding food to eat. So, if you can share some of your garden plants with hungry caterpillars, you will have even more butterflies in your yard! Most caterpillars eat only a very limited range of plants, so planting the right "hostplants" or food plants is important--and you do not have to worry

that they will spread to other plants. Also, because some caterpillars eat weeds and native grasses, leaving a patch of wild, unmowed vegetation will help attract butterflies.

FOOD PLANTS FOR CATERPILLARS

BUTTERFLY SPECIES	FOOD PLANT FOR ITS CATERPILLAR STAGE
Black swallowtail	Dill, parsley, anise, fennel, carrots, rue
Giant swallowtail	Citrus, rue, money or hop tree, prickly ash
Spicebush swallowtail	Camphor tree, spicebush, sweet bay, red bay, sassafras, tulip tree
Pipevine swallowtail	Dutchman's pipevine
Cloudless sulphur	Senna, partridge pea
Little sulphur	Partridge pea
Sleepy sulphur	Senna, partridge pea
Cabbage butterfly (sometimes considered a pest!)	Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kohlrabi
Monarch	Milkweeds
Queen	Milkweeds
Gulf fritillary	Passionflower vines
Zebra longwing (rare in our area)	Passionflower vines
Viceroy	Cottonwood, poplar, willow
Red-spotted purple	Willow, cottonwood, black cherry
Red admiral	Nettles, false nettle
Buckeye	Plantain, snapdragon
Painted lady	Hollyhock, thistles
Pearl crescent	Aster
Texas crescent	Shrimp plant, dicliptera, ruellia
Hackberry butterfly	Hackberry
Tawny emperor	Hackberry
Snout butterfly	Hackberry
Question mark	Hackberry, elm
Goatweed butterfly	Goatweed (<i>Croton</i> spp.)
Giant purple hairstreak	Mistletoe
Gray hairstreak	Various legumes

There are a number of excellent books on native butterflies and on butterfly gardening. The following are a few of our favorites:

- Ajilvski, G. 1990. Butterfly gardening for the South. Taylor Publishing Co., Dallas, TX. 342 pp. (about \$35.00)
- Mitchell, R.T., and H.S. Zim. 1987. Butterflies and moths: a golden guide. Golden Press, New York, NY. 160 pp. (about \$7.00)
- Stokes, D., Stokes, L., and E. Williams. 1991. The butterfly book: an easy guide to butterfly gardening, identification, and behavior. Little, Brown and Co., New York, NY. 96 pp. (about \$12.00)
- Tveten, J., and G. Tveten. 1996. Butterflies of Houston and southeast Texas. University of Austin Press, Austin, TX. 292 pp.. (about \$40.00)

