



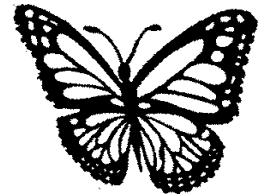
# J&L Garden Center

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620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

[www.JLGardenCenter.com](http://www.JLGardenCenter.com)

## Butterfly Gardening



Butterflies make a lovely ornament in a garden. Creating a butterfly garden is fun for the gardener and rewarding for the butterflies. You can attract butterflies for much of the year by growing succession of flowers and herbs that bloom from spring through fall. Butterflies have a few simple needs: sunlight, nectar sources, host plants on which to lay eggs, water, basking areas and roosting areas.

### Food

Food has to be available for both the adult butterflies, which sip nectar, and for their caterpillar offspring, which eat plants. Some of the common nectar plants for butterflies are Aster, Liatris, Coreopsis, Purple Coneflower, and Butterfly Bush. Most flowering herbs are also popular with butterflies. Try growing many different kinds of plants, so their blooming times vary both in time of day and time of year. Groups of nectar plants will be easier for butterflies to find than singly planted flowers. As a general landscaping rule, place short species in front and tall ones in back, and clump them by species and color. Butterflies are attracted to red, yellow, orange, and purple flowers. Avoid big, showy flowers that are bred for their size; they are often poor sources of nectar.



Caterpillars are highly selective in what they eat, and somehow butterflies remember their youth well enough to lay eggs on the appropriate plants. If you want butterflies in your garden, you will have to tolerate caterpillars munching on your plants from time to time. If caterpillars are eating excessive foliage from a prominent or desirable part of a plant, try moving them (with gloves on if they're hairy) to the backside, or, to another less noticeable portion of the plant. If you put in some extra plants you may not even notice. Some species of butterfly larvae eat only one species of plant. The striking green, black and white-yellow caterpillar of the black swallowtail, for instance, prefers parsley, dill and fennel. A butterfly book or insect guide will list the various host plants.

### Water

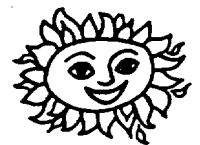
Like all creatures, butterflies require moisture. They also need the minerals and nutrients they get from mud and muddy water. If you don't have a naturally wet or boggy area, water the same spot in



the garden every day to create a small puddle. You can also submerge a bowl of water or wet sand in the ground and place soil around the edges. Overripe fruit, allowed to sit for a few days, is a very attractive substance (to them!) as well.

### Protection

Locate your butterfly garden in a sunny area where it gets eight to ten hours of sunlight each day. An area that is sheltered from the wind is good for these lightweight creatures who need to bask frequently in the sun. Provide them with some flat rocks for sunning and some shady spots for resting in the heat of the day.



Although we find them delightful to watch, butterflies are insects, of course, so go easy on insecticides in the garden. Insecticides do not know the difference between good bugs and bad bugs.

### Pesticides in the Butterfly Garden

Be aware that improper application of chemicals can upset the delicate balance of nature in the butterfly garden and wipe out your butterfly habitat in an instant. You don't have to forego chemical pesticides, but you must go easy. **Read the label.** Don't apply chemicals above the recommended rate or more often than the recommended frequency. Be aware of the side effects of whatever chemical you are using. It is the "side effects" that you risk going wrong, because of their unseen consequences. Time your applications of pesticides; both the time of day, and the time of season. Butterflies are not in your garden all the time; spring, summer and fall. Do not spray at night when the butterflies are resting in your garden, they are very vulnerable to the effects of your pesticides and cannot fly away.



Butterflies (and caterpillars) are insects. Insecticides such as Diazinon, Sevin, and Malathion kill insects. Or-



organic insecticides such as BT, Insecticidal Soap, Neem Oil, and Diatomaceous Earth, are just as deadly to butterflies and caterpillars if they are used improperly. They don't discriminate between harmful and beneficial insects. They are designed to kill insects that come into contact with them. **So what to do?**

Keep your head. If leaf-eating insects are nibbling on your plants ask yourself if it really matters. Can't the plant spare a few leaves? Why nuke your entire garden just to kill a few bad guys?

Remember, butterflies come from caterpillars. Caterpillars eat leaves. If you kill all the leaf eating caterpillars, where will the butterflies come from?

**Here are a few rules regarding pesticides:**

1. Less is more. Spray the plant instead of the garden. In fact, spray the part of the plant insects are after instead of the whole plant. And only spray insecticides if you know the insects are there. Preventative spraying of insecticides is not good in butterfly gardens.

2. Mellow out. Unless you are entering your plant in a contest, so what if something had nibbled some of the leaves.

3. Be vigilant. Walk your garden. Physically remove any pests that are unwelcome in your yard. Some of the unwanted critters are unpredictable, they can wipe out a plant over night, if you don't eliminate it first.

4. Don't exceed the recommended dose. Doubling the strength does not help, and it may burn the leaves of the very plant you are trying to save.

5. Make the plant taste bad. Certain sprays work on the principle that a plant that tastes bad to an insect won't be eaten by that insect, **Hot Pepper Wax** is an example of this approach. But remember that caterpillars need to eat larval plants. Don't get carried away with this technique or you may not have butterflies either.

6. Do not use systemic poisons. These are chemicals that are placed in the ground and are taken up by the plant's roots to make the entire plant poisonous. Unfortunately, this makes the plant a killer of both beneficial and harmful insects.



7. Avoid bacillus thuringiensis (BT). This is an organic insecticide which contains a bacterial pathogen that kills caterpillars. It is often cited favorably by natural gardeners as an accepted biological control because it doesn't harm most beneficial insects, but, it kills caterpillars. Butterfly gardeners need caterpillars to make more butterflies.

8. Buy a water wand to control spider mites and aphids. A high pressure spray of water knocks these critters off the leaves without the use of any chemicals. It is amazingly effective against some insects.

9. If thrips are attacking your roses and flowers, spray the insecticide only on the blossoms. Also, thrips usually attack just a few varieties of roses and flowers. Confine your attack to those plants that are most affected. This

technique will minimize the odds of insecticides drifting into "butterfly areas" of your garden.

10. Water your plants before you spray. You will disturb the butterflies and they may fly away long enough for the pesticide to kill the unwanted pests and then return when the pesticide is less toxic.



**Plants that attract and feed butterflies**

**Trees and Shrubs**

Butterfly Bush	Sumac	Quince
Privet	Weigela	Hawthorn
Hackberry	Lilac	Willow
Wild Cherry	Poplar	Apple
Elm		

**Vines**

Japanese Honeysuckle	Morning Glory
Trumpet Creeper	Wisteria
Honeysuckle	Queen Ann's Lace



**Perennial Flowers**

Bee Balm	Canna	Cardinal Flower
Columbine	Four A Clocks	Hosta
Lupine	Penstemon	Yucca
Hollyhock	Primrose	Phlox
Aster	Lavender	Sedum
Black-eyed Susan	Goldenrod	Clover
Lupines	Violets	Gayfeathers
Sweet Pea Lathyrus	Germander	Turtle Head
Chrysanthemum	Candytuft	Pincushion Flower
Cone Flower	Coreopsis	Columbine
Daisies	Day Lilies	False Indigo
Bee Balm	Indian Paintbrush	Fleabane
Foxglove	Scabiosa	Snaptagons
Sunflowers	Thyme	Tiger Lily
Valerian	Verbena	Violet
Veronica	Yarrow	

**Annual Flowers**

Beard Tongue	Fuschia	Impatiens
Petunia	Red Salvia	Cosmos
Marigold	Heliotrope	Lobelia
Zinnia	Petunia	Stock

**Weeds**

Milkweed	Plantain	Nettle
Dandelion	Globe Thistle	



**Vegetables and Herbs**

Chives	Corn	Catnip
Parsley	Mint	Garden Carrots
Bergamot	Rosemary	Sage

**Planting Guide**

1. Choose the butterfly species you wish to attract.
2. Select plants which those butterflies find favorable.
3. A source of water will always increase your success. Either a small pan, dish, or bird bath may work well.
4. An old stone fountain, or a gentle leeward slope will complete the habitat by serving as a natural wind break.
5. Choose plants that will bloom at different times of the year, so there is a constant source of food.