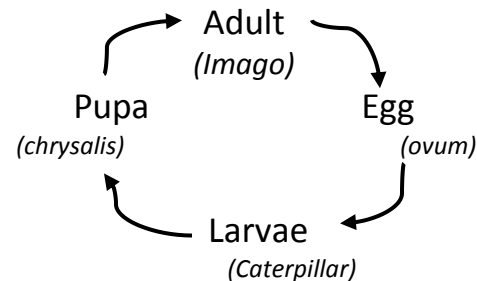


Making Space for Butterflies

By Christy Shivell of Shy Valley Native Habitat Nursery & Herbarry
423/348-6570 shyvalley@aol.com shyvalleyfarm.com

Butterflies are insects in the order Lepidoptera. (derived from the Greek words lepis and pteron, meaning scale and wing, respectively) They go through 4 distinct life stages in their life cycle:



Butterflies bring a whole new dimension to the garden. They are splendid creatures. Whether watching them flit and fly, studying their behavior as they bask and puddle, or observing their amazing transformation, you and your family will derive great satisfaction from having them present.

Creating a garden that is friendly to butterflies is easy, but it is more than just planting pretty flowers.

Butterfly gardening at its most effective is based on a three fold strategy:

1. Follow practices that protect and promote butterflies at all life stages
2. Provide for their changing needs at various life stages, and, lastly,
3. Provide a wide variety of nectar sources for them (this is where the pretty plants come in)

Butterfly Friendly Garden Practices

***Do not use chemicals in the garden. No insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides. Insecticides work on butterflies, too, and other chemicals may cause them harm, as well.

- Allow “weeds” such as dandelion, clover, and plantain to exist in your lawn. Many of these plants are great nectar and host plants for butterflies.
- Set your mower a little higher, and mow less often. Eggs and larvae living in the lawn will thank you.
- Allow natural areas to grow unmown, providing goldenrods, ironweed, thistle, milkweeds, and a host of other wildflowers to grow. (Birds will thank you, too)
- Allow larvae to feed on host plants. At times, adherence to this policy will require a great deal of tolerance to the damage they inflict.
- Don’t be too hasty when it comes to cleaning up brush, removing tall stems from dormant perennials, and removing downed limbs and tree trunks. Butterflies in various stages often overwinter in places such as these.

Providing for All the Needs of Butterflies

Butterflies need more than nectar to flourish.

- Shelter- Provide shelter from wind and rain by planting tall perennials, shrubs and trees.
- Sunlight- Butterflies love to flit around in large, open areas. A natural prairie is ideal, but your chemical free and clover rich lawn is a good compromise.
- Rocky areas for basking-Butterflies like to bask in the sun to dry their wings and warm themselves.
- Puddles or moist depressions for drinking Puddle areas contain concentrated minerals that butterflies crave.
- Mineral sources
- Winter homes Butterflies can overwinter in crevices in fallen wood. You can also put up a butterfly house, but remember, it will be used in winter, not summer.

Host and Nectar Plants for Butterflies

Shy Valley Native Habitat Nursery and Herbary

Christy Shivell 423/348-6570 shyvalleyfarm.com shyvalley@aol.com

Many butterflies have an exclusive relationship with one plant or one plant family. These butterflies absolutely require a chemical that is present in that particular host and no other.

Other butterflies will feed on nearly anything. In either case, but in the former case particularly, it is a good idea to generously use native plants, as they are sure to provide for all the needs of our native butterflies.

Dandelion	**Phlox (Several species)
Plantain	**Ironweed (Vernonia-several)
Sassafras	**Milkweeds
Spicebush	Asclepias tuberosa
Passionflower	(Butterfly Weed)
Violet (Several species)	Asclepias incarnata
Jewel weed	(Swamp Milkweed)
Wild Ginger	**Coneflower (Echinacea-several species)
Solidago	**Asters, especially New England Aster,
Nettle	White Wood Aster, and Aromatic Aster
Dogbane	Sedum (Native and Non-native varieties)
Anise Hyssop	Golden Ragwort
Bluestar (Amsonia)	Wild Geranium
Native Azaleas	Pycnanthemum (Mtn. Mint)
Pipevine	New Jersey Tea
**Buttonbush	**Coreopsis (several species)
Poplar	**Bee Balm and other Monarda
Pawpaw	**Blazing star (Liatris- several species)
Fire Pink	**Eupatorium
Wild Pink	Boneset White Snake Root
Native Thistle	Joe Pye Weed Wild Ageratum
	Wild Ageratum

Plants to Attract Beneficial Insects or Repel Pests - Some are also very attractive to Butterflies

Oregano	Mints
Cosmos	Lavender
Basil	Marigolds
Sage	Dill
Fennel	Rosemary
Rue	Borage
Coriander/Cilantro	
Parsley	Yarrow
Caraway	Nasturtiums
Tansy	Lovage
Marjoram	Golden Marguerites