



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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MALIBU/SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS, CALIFORNIA

by Sandy Russell

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

An asterisk (*) in front of a flower name indicates a particularly recommended plant. Numbers in "BLOOM SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.); W = winter, S = spring, X = summer, F = fall. Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A * Hibiscus <i>Hibiscus</i>	2-6'	various	all year (1-12)	Western Tiger Swallowtail Cloudless Sulphur, Hair- streaks, Blues, Gulf Fritillary	tender perennials; need well-drained rich soil, watering
A Lantana <i>Lantana</i>		purple	all year (1-12)	many	
A * Rosemary <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	1-3'	purple	W-S	Swallowtails, Whites, Ladies	tolerates full sun & drought; needs well-drained soil
N * Deerweed <i>Lotus scoparius</i>	3'	orange	all year (1-12)	Whites, Hairstreaks, Blues Painted Lady, Skippers	native to dry, sunny spots
N * Sticky monkeyflower <i>Mimulus longiflorus</i>	3-6'	apricot	1-7	Sara Orangetip, Checker- spots, other spring species	needs well-drained soil, room to grow
N Ceanothus <i>Ceanothus grisens</i>	trailing shrub	blue	S	various	sun or partial shade
N Coreopsis (bush sunflower) <i>Coreopsis</i>	varies	yellow	S	various	
N * Hummingbird or pitcher sage <i>Salvia spathacea</i>	1-3'	pink- crimson	3-5	Swallowtails, hummingbirds	prefers partial shade
N * Columbine <i>Aquilegia</i>	to 4'	various	S-X	Swallowtails, Fritillaries hummingbirds	usually found in moist montane conditions
N * Purple sage <i>Salvia leucophylla</i>	3-5'	purple	S-X (5-7)	various	prefers open, sunny dry conditions
A Butterfly milkweed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2-3'	orange	S-F	various, especially Monarch	
N Goldenrods <i>Solidago</i>	varies	yellow	S-F	various, especially Monarch	
A * Scarlet monkeyflower <i>Mimulus cardinalis</i>	2-4'	red	S-F (4-10)	Cabbage & Checkered White Checkerspot; Painted Lady Common Ringlet	needs part shade; regular water

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(continued)

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N *	Coastal buckwheat <i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	2'	pink	S-F (4-11)	Swallowtails, Blues, Checkerspot, Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Skippers	needs full sun; drought tolerant
N *	California fuchsia <i>Zauschneria californica</i>	perennial herb	scarlet	X-F	Swallowtails, hummingbirds	drought and sun tolerant; may be invasive; self-seeds
A *	Impatiens <i>Impatiens</i>	varies	various	X	Swallowtails, Cabbage White, Gulf Fritillary	needs partial to full shade
*	Passion vine <i>Passiflora</i> , esp. <i>manicata</i> , <i>jamesonii</i>	vine	red	X	Cabbage White, Gulf Fritillary, Painted Lady	needs sun, water, feeding, pruning
A	Bougainvillea <i>Bougainvillea</i>	vine	red & various		various	tender to frost
A	Day lilies <i>Hemerocallis</i>	3-4'	various		various	

NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

	FLOWER	COMMENTS
A	Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia davidii</i>	hard to grow; does not produce enough bloom to attract butterflies in sloping chaparral areas; does better in watered gardens
N	Narrow-leaved milkweed <i>Asclepias fascicularis</i>	the native milkweed here, but sparse in foliage; the non-native <i>A. tuberosa</i> or <i>curassavica</i> do better
N/A	Thistles <i>Cirsium</i>	Throughout the West, thistles are not as attractive to butterflies as in the East; I don't know why.

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

An asterisk (*) indicates a particularly recommended plant. Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

	NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS
N *	Buckwheat <i>Eriogonum</i>	herb	Bramble Hairstreak, Blues, Mormon Metalmark
N	Ceanothus <i>Ceanothus</i>	shrub	Hedgerow Hairstreak

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TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

(continued)

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS
N * Deerweed <i>Lotus scoparius</i>	3'	Orange Sulphur, Bramble Hairstreak, Marine Blue, Silvery Blue, Funereal Duskywing
A * Hibiscus Hibiscus	2-6'	Gray Hairstreak, Common Checkered-Skipper
N/A Milkweed <i>Asclepias</i>	2-3'	Monarch
N Oaks <i>Quercus</i>	shrub/tree	Hairstreaks, California Sister
A * Passion vine <i>Passiflora</i> , especially soft-leaved ones like <i>manicata</i> , <i>jamesonii</i>	vine	Gulf Fritillary (must be grown in pots; must be protected from ants for larvae to succeed)
N * Sticky monkeyflower <i>Mimulus longiflorus</i>	3-6'	Checkerspots

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.), with < meaning earlier in the month, m the middle of the month, and > late in the month.

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS
Anise Swallowtail <i>Papilio zelicaon</i>	spring-summer		anise, parsley
Western Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio rutulus</i>	spring-summer		sycamores
Checkered White <i>Pontia protodice</i>	long season		members of mustard family
Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	year-round	year-round	many members of mustard family; nasturtium
Sara Orangetip <i>Anthocharis sara</i>	spring		a few members of mustard family
Bramble Hairstreak <i>Callophrys dumetorum</i>	spring		deerweed
Gray Hairstreak <i>Strymon melinus</i>	2-11	long season	hibiscus
Marine Blue <i>Leptotes marina</i>	3-10	long season	members of pea (legume) family
Mormon Metalmark <i>Apodemia mormo</i>	3-5 & 8-9		buckwheats

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COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	summer		passion vine	
Variable Checkerspot <i>Euphydryas chalcedona</i>	spring-summer		monkeyflower	
Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	long season	long season	thistles, composites, mallows, others	
West Coast Lady <i>Vanessa annabella</i>	long season	long season	mallows, hollyhocks, globemallows	
Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	long season	long season	nettles; hops	
California Sister <i>Limenitis bredowii</i>	3-9		oaks	
Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	year-round		milkweeds	
Fiery Skipper <i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	4-12		lawn grasses	

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

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NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS
Sonoran Blue <i>Philotes sonorensis</i>	2-4		live-forever (<i>Dudleya</i>)
Fatal Metalmark <i>Calephelis nemesis</i>	2-10	long season	bush sunflower
Callippe Fritillary <i>Speyeria callippe</i>	summer		violets
'California' Common Ringlet <i>Coenonympha tullia californica</i>	2-10	long season	grasses

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: 10

California is a difficult area for giving butterfly gardening advice, as there are such variety and extreme of microclimate and plant community. My best advice is for the gardener to go to the best local nursery, one which stocks both natives and exotics, and observe carefully several times. The nursery plants are in good health, massed and blooming, and should be an effective magnet for butterfly species that the gardener could expect to attract. Nursery or landscape plants will immediately attract the generalist common butterflies; endemics are more work and require more study, and can take a few years before success. For these more localized species it helps if there is a natural area nearby.

In designing the garden, accessibility for the gardener – to check plants, observe, and photograph – is most important. That's why I favor a crescent shape, with lots of edge, near a tree or high brush line. Sun exposure is really important. A great bed of blooms just won't attract if it isn't sunny as well.

In terms of plants that don't work – these are usually the ones that don't grow vigorously in your garden. My conditions are just not good enough for my butterfly bush, and so it is that in name only! Other problems have to do with local insect pests and predations, such as aphids overwhelming the milkweeds and discouraging oviposition by the Monarchs, or ants colonizing the passion vine. These just have to be worked out.

Then there are other mystery factors – why one huge succulent patch of buckwheat is swarming with checkerspots, and the equally lush patch next to it just isn't! That is a frequent observation in California.

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