



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

by Joann Karges

with contributions by Larry Sweeney, Kay Phillips, and others in the Tarrant County Butterfly Society

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

A number in front of a flower name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Numbers in "BLOOM SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.); codes correspond to the season (S = spring, X = summer, F = fall). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species; < = early, > = late.

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A	Bush honeysuckle <i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	to 5'	white	1-3	species wintering as adults, especially Red Admiral	withstands even hard freezes
N	Elbow-bush <i>Forestiera pubescens</i>	3'	yellow	1-3	many	flowers before leafing out
A	Candytuft <i>Iberis sempervivens</i>	to 1'	white	1-12	many, especially Sulphurs	winter hardy
A	Indian hawthorn <i>Raphiolepis indica</i>	2½'		3-4	many	evergreen shrub; abundant blooms
A/N	Viburnums <i>Viburnum rufidulum</i> (N) & others (A)	to 12'	white	3-4	Brush-footed Butterflies	
N	Downy phlox <i>Phlox pilosa</i>	1'	pink	S	many	
A	Hairy vetch <i>Vicia villosa</i>	2'	purple	S	Sulphurs	
A	Shasta daisy <i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>	2½'	white	S	Brush-footed Butterflies	
N	Antelope horns <i>Asclepias asperula</i>	1'	white-green	S-X	many	
N	Bush honeysuckle <i>Lonicera albiflora</i>	to 5'	white	S-X	many	
N	Buttonbush <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	to 6'	white	S-X	many	moist areas (lake, creek banks)
A	Common vetch <i>Vicia sativa</i>	1'	purple	S-X	Sulphurs	
N	Drummond's phlox <i>Phlox drummondii</i>	1-2'	pink, red	S-X	many	
A	Garden phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	3-4'	pink	S-X	many	
N	Green milkweed <i>Asclepias viridis</i>	1'	white-green	S-X		

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BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

(continued)

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N	Autumn sage <i>Salvia greggi</i>	2-3'	red	6-11	many	drought tolerant; prune in spring
A	Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia davidii</i>	4½-5'	pink, purple	S-F	many	"Black Knight" esp. recommended
A 1	Lantana <i>Lantana camara</i>	4-5'	many	S-F	many	
N 1	Lantana <i>Lantana urticoides (=horrida)</i>	4-5'	orange	S-F	many	
A	Mexican (mint) marigold <i>Tagetes lucida</i>	2½'		S-F	many	
A 2	Pentas <i>Pentas</i>	2½'	red, pink	S-F	Swallowtails, Monarch	heat tolerant
A/N	Verbena <i>Verbena</i>	varies	pink, purple	S-F	many	
A	Mexican milkweed <i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	2-4'	red-gold	X	many	may survive winter if heavily mulched
A	Abelia <i>Abelia</i>	4-5'	white	X-F	Monarch	evergreen shrub
N	Butterfly weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2'	orange	X-F	many	
N	Mealy blue sage <i>Salvia azurea</i>	2-3'	blue	X-F	many	
N 3	Purple coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	2-3'	pink-purple	X-F	Swallowtails, Queen, Monarch	
A	Spiraea <i>Spiraea japonica</i>	3-4'	pink	X-F	many	
N	Turk's cap <i>Malvaviscus drummondii</i>	4½'	red	X-F	Cloudless Sulphur, Gulf Fritillary	also good for hummingbirds
A 4	Zinnia <i>Zinnia</i>	1'	many	X-F	Gulf Fritillary, Skippers	
N	Tall boneset <i>Eupatorium altissimum</i>	4-5'	white	8-11	many	tall plant; perennial
N	Maximilian sunflower <i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	3-5'	yellow	9-10	Monarch	
A	Sedum <i>Sedum spectabile</i>	2½'	pink	9-10	many	
A/N	Aster <i>Aster</i>	varies	purple		many	
A	Cosmos <i>Cosmos</i>	2-3'	various		many	
N	Mistflower <i>Eupatorium coelestinum</i>	2½-3'	blue		many	

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NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

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

Note: Some flowers do not attract butterflies either because they have no nectar or because the nectar cannot be reached by the butterflies' relatively short proboscides ("tube-tongues" through which the butterfly sips its food). Among these are cultivated roses, begonias, crape myrtle, magnolias, and bulbous flowers (tulips, daffodils, etc.).

FLOWER	COMMENTS
A Celosia (Cockscomb) <i>Celosia argentea</i>	
Chaste-tree <i>Vitex agnuscastus</i>	occasionally visited by Eastern Tiger Swallowtail; otherwise nothing
A Old-fashioned (antique) roses <i>Rosa</i>	
N Common sunflower <i>Helianthus annuus</i>	
A Petunias <i>Petunia</i>	
A Sweet alyssum <i>Alyssum maritimum</i>	visited only rarely

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

A number in front of a plant name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

	NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N	Gerardia <i>Agalinis heterophylla</i>	1'	Common Buckeye	used as food plant in mid-summer to fall
A 1	Dill <i>Anethum graveolens</i>	3'	Black Swallowtail	a culinary herb
N	Pipe vine <i>Aristolochia tomentosa</i>	vine	Pipevine Swallowtail	
N	Antelope horns <i>Asclepias asperula</i>	2'	Monarch, Queen	excellent nectar source too
A 1	Mexican milkweed <i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	2-4'	Monarch, Queen	excellent nectar source too
N	Heath and other asters <i>Aster ericoides</i> and other native species	to 3'	Pearl Crescent	good nectar sources too
N 1	Netleaf hackberry <i>Celtis reticulata</i>	to 50'	American Snout, Question Mark, Hackberry & Tawny Emperors	a "weedy" tree
N	Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	to 12'	Henry's Elfin	also a nectar source for spring butterflies
N	Partridge pea <i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	3'	Cloudless Sulphur	
N	Texas thistle <i>Cirsium texanum</i>	to 5'	Painted Lady	collect seed in late summer from roadsides
A	Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	3'	Black Swallowtail	esp. favored by Black Swallowtail; a culinary herb
N	Texas toadflax <i>Linaria texana</i>	2'	Common Buckeye	used as food plant in spring
N 2	Maypop <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	vine	Gulf Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary	deciduous; 3-lobed leaves

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TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

(continued)

	NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N	Yellow passionvine <i>Passiflora lutea</i>	vine	Gulf Fritillary	
A 1	Blue passionvine <i>Passiflora caerulea</i>	vine	Gulf Fritillary	evergreen; 5-lobed leaves
A 1	Parsley <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	1'	Black Swallowtail	a culinary herb
N 1	Frog fruit <i>Phyla lanceolata</i>	3"	Phaon Crescent	excellent ground cover
N	Wild dill (prairie parsley) <i>Polytaenia nuttallii</i>	to 3'	Black Swallowtail	
N	Wild petunia <i>Ruellia caroliniensis</i>	2'	Texan Crescent	
A 3	Rue <i>Ruta graveolens</i>	2'	Giant Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail	will overwinter if covered on freezing nights
N	Western soapberry <i>Sapindus drummondii</i>	to 40'	Soapberry Hairstreak	also a nectar source for spring butterflies
N	Two-leaf senna <i>Senna roemeriana</i>	1'	Sleepy Orange	
A	White clover <i>Trifolium repens</i>	8"	Clouded Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak (feeds on flowers only)	also a good nectar source for many butterflies
N	American elm <i>Ulmus americana</i>	to 60'	Question Mark	
N 1	Cowpen daisy <i>Verbesina encelioides</i>	3'	Bordered Patch	
N/A	Violets <i>Viola</i>	6-8"	Variegated Fritillary	
N	Hercules club <i>Zanthoxylum clava-herculis</i>	to 30'	Giant Swallowtail	very thorny

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

A number in front of a butterfly name indicates a particularly likely species (1 = most expected to be seen). Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.); codes to the season (S = spring, X = summer, F = fall); < = early, > = late.

	NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
2	Pipevine Swallowtail <i>Battus philenor</i>	4-11	>S-X	pipe vines	
1	Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	5-11	>S-F	dill, fennel, parsley, & related	

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COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
2 Giant Swallowtail <i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	4-10	>S->X	hercules club, rue	
1 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i>	4-11	3-10	ashes, cherries	
5 Checkered White <i>Pontia protodice</i>	2-12	1-12	plant in mustard family	
1 Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	3-11	3-11	plants in mustard family	
5 Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	2-12	1-12	vetches, clovers	
1 Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	1-12	1-12	vetches & related	
1 Southern Dogface <i>Colias cesonia</i>	3-10	2-11	clovers & related	
1 Cloudless Sulphur <i>Phoebis sennae</i>	4-10	X-F	candletree, senna, & other cassias	
1 Little Yellow <i>Eurema lisa</i>	3-10	S-X	sennas	
1 Sleepy Orange <i>Eurema nicippe</i>	1-12	1-12	two-leaved senna & other sennas	
1 Dainty Sulphur <i>Nathalis iole</i>	1-12	1-12	green-thread (<i>Thelesperma</i>) & related	
1 Gray Hairstreak <i>Strymon melinus</i>	3-11	S-F	lantana, Turk's cap, white clover, legumes	
2 Reakirt's Blue <i>Hemiargus isola</i>	5-11	S-X	prairie-mimosa & other legumes	
3 Eastern Tailed-Blue <i>Everes comyntas</i>	4-10		flowers of plants in the pea family	
1 American Snout <i>Libytheana carinenta</i>	1-12		hackberries	
1 Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	5-11	>S-F	passion vines	
2 Variegated Fritillary <i>Euptoieta claudia</i>	1-12	S-F	purple pansy, violets	
3 Bordered Patch <i>Chlosyne lacinia</i>	5-10		sunflowers and related	
3 Texan Crescent <i>Phyciodes texana</i>	6-11		plants in acanthus family	
3 Phaon Crescent <i>Phyciodes phaon</i>	5-10		frog fruit	
1 Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	5-10	S-F	native asters	
2 Question Mark <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>	1-12		elms, hackberries, nettles	adults attracted to rotten fruits
2 American Lady <i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	3-11	S-F	everlastings	
1 Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	3-11	S-X	thistles, legumes	

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COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
1 Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	1-12	S-X	nettles	adults attracted to rotten fruits
1 Common Buckeye <i>Junonia coenia</i>	3-11	>S-X	plants in acanthus & snapdragon families	
1 Hackberry Emperor <i>Asterocampa celtis</i>	4-11		hackberries	adults attracted to rotten fruits
1 Tawny Emperor <i>Asterocampa clyton</i>	4-11		hackberries	
5 Red-spotted Purple <i>Limenitis arthemis astyanax</i>	5-10		wild cherries and others	
4 Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i>	5-10		willows	
3 Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	3-6, 9-11	S, F	milkweeds	
2 Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	4-11	S-X	locusts & related	
2 Hayhurst's Scallopwing <i>Staphylus hayhurstii</i>	3-10		lamb's quarters	
3 Horace's Duskywing <i>Erynnis horatius</i>	4-9		oaks	
3 Funereal Duskywing <i>Erynnis funeralis</i>	3-11		plants in pea family	
1 Common Checkered-Skipper <i>Pyrgus communis</i>	2-11		plants in mallow family	
1 Fiery Skipper <i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	5-10		grasses	
1 Sachem <i>Atalopedes campestris</i>	2-11		grasses	

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

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NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS
Falcate Orangetip <i>Anthocharis midea</i>	2-3	2-3	native herbaceous mustards
1 Great Purple Hairstreak <i>Atlides halesus</i>	5-10		mistletoes
3 Soapberry Hairstreak <i>Phaeostrymon alcestis</i>	5-10		soapberry
4 Henry's Elfin <i>Callophrys henrici</i>	3-4	3-4	redbud

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LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS
'Olive' Juniper Hairstreak <i>Callophrys gryneus</i>	4-10	4-10	junipers
3 Red-banded Hairstreak <i>Calycopis cecrops</i>	4-10		rotting leaves, esp. sumac
Zebra <i>Heliconius charitonius</i>		X	passion vines
4 Mourning Cloak <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	11-3	X	willows
Little Wood-Satyr <i>Megisto cymela</i>	5-9		grasses
Common Wood-Nymph <i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	4-11		grasses
2 Queen <i>Danaus gilippus</i>	5-10	5-10	milkweeds, milkvines
Common Sootywing <i>Pholisora catullus</i>	3-11		lamb's quarters

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: 8

Imported fire ants are a major problem difficult to control. They attack all butterfly life stages. Use Logic brand growth inhibitor twice a year, only in very dry weather and only when ants are actively foraging. Even then, it takes two months to see results. Boiling water or vinegar can take care of individual fire ant mounds. For other pest control, it's fine to spray an insecticidal soap solution on an aphid-infested plant so long as butterfly caterpillars are not present and you rinse the soap off after it dries.

Western Tarrant County has less acid soil than the eastern part, which is more like Dallas County (except for some river bottom areas there).

A rotting fruit tray of pears and peaches (or a tree - these are two types of fruit trees that do well in the Texas summer) will attract hordes of Red Admirals and Question Marks, and occasional Mourning Cloaks and Hackberry Emperors. It should be away from the house because flies and wasps are also attracted and the tray should have an ant moat around it. It can be hung off the ground several feet. The fruit should be kept moist by adding beer or water. A nearby shrub or fence provides a good perch and patrol spot. Commercially available butterfly feeders with the top removed can be used for this purpose, although any tray would do. Moths like this too.

Large flat stones are recommended in gardens as places for butterflies to bask. A moist patch of sand or dirt provides a place for butterflies to drink and take in trace elements from the earth.

A number of "weeds" and grasses are important caterpillar food plants, and these can be allowed in larger areas where maintenance, poor soil, and/or watering might be problems for maintaining a more kempt garden. These plants re-seed themselves abundantly. The Satyrs and Folded-wing Skippers use both native and alien grasses such as big bluestem, Dallas and other paspalums, St. Augustine, Bermuda, bamboo, and crabgrass.

While "butterfly houses" (hibernation boxes) are interesting objects for the garden, they have not proved useful to butterflies or moths in this region. Butterflies that overwinter in the adult life stage, such as the Red Admiral, Question Mark, and Mourning Cloak, seek shelter in hollow trees, under rock ledges, etc., while others find shelter in grasses and weeds. Butterflies here do not hibernate; they go into a temporary torpor, or diapause, in bad weather and emerge to fly and seek nectar on warmer, sunny days of winter (above 55°).

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