



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

by Barbara Deutsch and Sally Levinson

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

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N/A	Bur marigolds <i>Bidens</i>	2-5'	white, pink, yellow	1-12	Gulf Fritillary, Vanessids Common Buckeye, Skippers	
A	Heliotrope <i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>	1'	white, pale purple	1-12	many	long-lived where no hard freezes
N	Yerba santa <i>Eriodictyon</i>	3-5'	white, lavendar	2-4	many	available from Las Pilitas nursery
N	Phacelia <i>Phacelia californica</i>	1-2'	lavendar	3-5	many	
A	Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia davidii</i>	8'	purple, magenta, white	3-10	many	season of bloom depends on pruning
A	Statice <i>Statice</i>	2'	purple	3-10	many	
A 1	Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	1'	yellow	3-11	Gossamer Wings (Lycaenids) Vanessids, Skippers	a common lawn weed
A 1	Jupiter's beard <i>Centranthus ruber</i>	2'	pink, crimson	3-11	Pipevine, Anise Swallowtail California Tortoiseshell Vanessids, Common Buckeye, Monarch Common Checkered-Skipper	drought resistant; easy to grow; white-flowered variety unattractive to butterflies
A	Cape Plumbago <i>Plumbago capensis</i> (vine)	12'	light blue	3-12	Swallowtails, Vanessids Monarch, Skippers	requires support
N 1	California buckeye <i>Aesculus californica</i>	to 40'	pink-white	4-6	many (best native nectar plant)	prune to desired height
A	Sage <i>Salvia clevelandii</i> and others	1-3'	light purple	4-10	Pipevine Swallowtail Anise Swallowtail	
N	Spikeweeds (tarweeds) <i>Hemizonia</i>	1-4'	yellow	4-11	many	

BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

(continued)

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N	Whitethorn <i>Ceanothus incanus</i>	1-4'	white	3-7		no summer water needed
A	Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia globosa</i>	5-6'	gold	4-6	California Sister Monarch	
N	Toyon <i>Heteromeles californica</i>	4-8'	white	5-7	many	do not prune in spring
N/A1	Thistles <i>Cirsium</i> sp.	2-4'	pink, purple	6-9	many, especially fall Monarchs	
A 1	Lantanas <i>Lantana camara, hirta, montevidensis</i>	3'	yellow, orange, magenta, white, pink	6-9	Pipevine, Anise, Western Tiger Swallowtails; Gray Hairstreak, Gulf Fritillary Checkerspots, Vanessids Monarch, Skippers	easy to grow; white flowers attract Checker- spots and Common Buckeye
A	Verbena <i>Verbena</i>	1-4'	purple	6-10	Pipevine, Anise, Western Tiger Swallowtails, Monarch	'Homestead Purple' is a good cultivar
A	Glossy abelia <i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	6-8'	white	6-11	Vanessids (Ladies and Red Admiral), Monarch	a shrub
A	Blue leadwort <i>Cerastostigma griffithii</i>	2-3'	bright blue	7-11	Gulf Fritillary, Ladies Skippers	
A	Escallonia <i>Escallonia montevidensis</i>	3-10'	white, pink	7-11	Swallowtails Vanessids (Ladies and Red Admiral), Monarch	easy to establish; prune for size or to induce bloom
A	Mexican sunflower <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	6-8'	orange	7-11	Pipevine & Western Tiger Swallowtails, Monarch	
N	Anchor plant <i>Colletia cruciata</i>	to 6'	white	8-10	Vanessids, Common Buckeye, Monarch	prickly, cactus- like plant
A/N	Asters <i>Aster</i>	6"	lavendar	8-10	Gossamer Wings, Crescents Vanessids, Common Buckeye Monarch, Skippers	

NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

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

FLOWER	COMMENTS
A Daylilies <i>Hemerocallis</i>	Common in the area but butterflies don't visit them.

BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

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
A/N	Asters <i>Aster</i>	1-4'	Field Crescent	naturalize on slope or in meadow
N	Buckwheats <i>Eriogonum latifolium, nudum, parvifolium</i>	1-2'	Gray Hairstreak, Acmon Blue	(<i>E. fascicularis</i> not used)
N	California buckeye <i>Aesculus californica</i>	8-15'	'Echo' Spring Azure	can be pruned in late summer
N	California bee plant <i>Scrophularia californica</i>	2-3'	Variable (Chalcedon) Checkerspot	likes moisture
N	California pipevine <i>Aristolochia californica</i>	vine	Pipevine Swallowtail	(<i>A. elegans</i> toxic to caterpillars)
N	California sycamore <i>Platanus racemosa</i>	40-90'	Western Tiger Swallowtail	grows along streams
N	Coffeeberry <i>Rhamnus californica</i>	3-10'	'Echo' Spring Azure	'Eve Case' stays small, compact
N	Cottonwoods, poplars <i>Populus</i>	to 40-70'	Western Tiger Swallowtail, Mourning Cloak, Lorquin's Admiral	
N 1	Cudweeds <i>Gnaphalium</i>	1-2'	American Lady	does well as edging or crevice plant
A 1	Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	8'	Anise Swallowtail	Plant should be kept cut back.
N	Globemallows <i>Sphaeralcea</i>	2-4'	Gray Hairstreak, Painted Lady West Coast Lady, Common Checkered-Skipper	weedy mallows are also used
A 1	Hollyhock <i>Althaea rosea</i>	8'	Painted Lady, West Coast Lady Common Checkered-Skipper	Single or double- it doesn't matter.
A	Mexican milkweed <i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	2-3'	Monarch	
N 2	Narrow-leaved milkweed <i>Asclepias fascicularis</i>	2-4'	Monarch	
A 1	Nasturtium <i>Tropaelum majus</i>	1'	Cabbage White	easy; self seeds
A/N	Nettles <i>Urtica</i>	1/2-5'	Red Admiral Anglewings	
A 1	Passion vine <i>Passiflora caerulea</i> (and others)	to 20'	Gulf Fritillary	must be in full sun to be used
A 1	Pellitory <i>Parietaria judaica</i>	2'	Red Admiral	needs water when dry to be used
A/N	Penstemon <i>Penstemon</i>	1-4'	Checkerspots (inland species prefer penstemon) Common Buckeye	

BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

(continued)

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N/A1 Plantains <i>Plantago hirtella, lanceolata</i>	1'	Common Buckeye	common weed
N Sidalceas <i>Sidalcea</i>	1-3'	Painted Lady, West Coast Lady, Common Checkered-Skipper; perhaps Gray Hairstreak	
A Snapdragons <i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	1'	Common Buckeye	
A/N Sticky monkeyflower <i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>	1-4'	Checkerspot (combine with bee plant) Common Buckeye (combine with plantain)	
N/A Thistles <i>Cirsium</i>	2-5'	Mylitta Crescent, Painted Lady	plant in stages to stagger new growth
N Toyon <i>Heteromeles californica</i>	4-8'	'Echo' Spring Azure	prune to suit <u>after</u> spring adult flight
N Willows <i>Salix</i>	to 15-50'	Western Tiger Swallowtail, Mourning Cloak (prefers <i>S. hindsii</i>), Lorquin's Admiral	

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.), with < meaning earlier in the month, m in the middle of the month, and > late in the month.

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
2 Anise Swallowtail <i>Papilio zelicaon</i>	2-11	2-11	fennel, parsley	
1 Western Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio rutulus</i>	3-11	4-11	cherry, poplar, sycamore, willow	2nd brood much larger than 1st
1 Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	1-12	1-12	mustard (cabbage) family; nasturtium	
2 Gray Hairstreak <i>Strymon melinus</i>	3-10	3-10	mallows, buckwheats, many others	
'Echo' Spring Azure <i>Celastrina ladon (echo)</i>	2-7	2-7	flowers of many spring-flowering shrubs & trees	
Acmon Blue <i>Plebejus acmon</i>	2-10	2-10	buckwheats (<i>Eriogonum</i>), lotus	
Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	3-11	3-11	passion vines	found near this plant when in sun
Mourning Cloak <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	2-11	3-7	hackberries, willows	

BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
2 Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	2-11	2-11	Hollyhock, cheese-weed, thistles, others	large fluctuations in abundance
1 West Coast Lady <i>Vanessa annabella</i>	3-10	4-10	cheeseweed and other mallows	
1 Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	1-12	1-12	pellitory, nettles	
Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	12-2 (overwintering) 3-6 & 9-11 (migrant)		milkweeds	summers in Mount Diablo area
2 Common Checkered-Skipper <i>Pyrgus communis</i>	3-11	3-11	cheeseweed, sidalceas, globemallows, mallows	
1 Fiery Skipper <i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	3-11		grasses and sedges, especially Bermuda grass, <i>Bromus carinatus</i> , <i>Sporobolus</i>	
Umber Skipper <i>Poanes melane</i>	3-11		grasses and sedges	

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

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NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Pipevine Swallowtail <i>Battus philenor</i>	3-7	4-7	pipevines	
Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	2-11	2-11	alfalfa, clovers, and related legumes	in Bay Area in late summer
Field Crescent <i>Phyciodes campestris</i>	3-10	3-10	asters	butterfly stays close to asters
Mylitta Crescent <i>Phyciodes mylitta</i>	3-10	3-10	thistles	
Checkerspots <i>Euphydryas</i>	3-6	3-4	coastal: bee plant, sticky monkeyflower inland: penstemons	
California Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis californica</i>	2-11	4-8	Ceanothus	large fluctuations in abundance
Common Buckeye <i>Junonia coenia</i>	1-12	1-12	Plantain, monkey-flower, snapdragon	common in some years, scarce others
Lorquin's Admiral <i>Limenitis lorquini</i>	4-10	4-10	cottonwoods, poplars, willows	

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: not applicable; very little frost, very little heat.

The soil around Berkeley is clay; add lots of compost in this particular area, even to grow weeds (or grow in shallow raised beds on top of clay). Elsewhere compost should only be used where it does not destroy the integrity of mineral surfaces that many native soils have. The weather is mild year-round and doesn't correspond to USDA zones. Butterflies and caterpillars can be found almost year-round, so plan for nectar over almost all the year and don't cut back caterpillar food plants all at once. Transfer any larvae from pruned plants to fresh growing foliage. Many caterpillar food plants can be grown without watering (although watered plants that are fresh and tender are more attractive to butterflies) since they are weeds, or can become weedy. These weeds (aliens) are common in the region and are used frequently by the butterflies. For example, pellitory is not commercially available but will transplant readily. Pellitory should not be planted in Contra Costa County or near natural areas. Plantain is another favored weed that does not require the moist conditions necessary for the native *Plantago hirtella*. Butterfly plants consist of every type of plant you might grow in your garden: annuals, perennials, bushes, trees, vegetables, shade plants, weeds, lawn grass, and lawn weeds. Plan your landscape as a whole, figuring out where you want each of these types of plants around your home, and then incorporate butterfly plants into the landscape plan. It's also easy to add butterfly plants into an existing garden this way. Try to work with other gardeners to maximize butterfly habitat in your neighborhood. Nectar plants need to be in sunny places to be useful to butterflies. Water is very important in this region and should be provided in as naturalistic a way as possible (e.g., an imitation of a seep on a rocky slope; a mud-bank on a flat area). Keep notes and share what you learn!

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