In the five years since its inception, NABA’s Butterfly Garden Certification program has attracted over 900 people interested in increasing habitat for butterflies. Many individuals, facilities, and institutions, including schools, golf courses, nursing homes, state parks, garden clubs, and cemeteries, have certified their habitats through NABA. Posting a NABA butterfly garden certification sign helps to open conversations about the importance of butterfly habitat and increase public awareness about the needs of butterflies.

Have you certified your butterfly garden with NABA? If so, Butterfly Gardener might be interested in highlighting your butterfly garden experience in the magazine. Submissions to the magazine should be 1,000 words or less and be accompanied by three to five photos (of at least 1MB file size). Gardens will be selected on a variety of criteria such as quality of photos, location of garden (we would like to highlight many regions), types of plants used, and, of course, the story of your butterfly garden experience. Butterfly Gardener does not pay for articles but does provide three complimentary copies of the issue in which an author’s article runs. Additionally, certified butterfly gardens that are highlighted will receive a pdf of their Butterfly Gardener article that they may reproduce for their own use.

For further details, please contact Butterfly Gardener at hurwitz@naba.org

The Great Butterfly Bush Debate has long been raging. It seems everything about this plant - *Buddleja davidii* - is debatable, from the spelling of its scientific name (is it *Buddleja* as indicated on the USDA website, or the more commonly used *Buddleia*) to the plant’s common name (is it Orange Eye butterfly bush, courtesy again of the USDA website, or the more widely used butterfly bush?). When we move from the name of the plant to the use of the plant, the debate intensifies. What role should it play in butterfly gardening? Is it too invasive? Should it be planted at all?

This special issue of *Butterfly Gardener* is devoted to the butterfly bush (however you choose to name or spell it). The sole purpose of the issue is to provide lots of food for thought, similar to the overload of nectar provided by the butterfly bush itself. My own thoughts about using butterfly bush as a nectar plant have changed quite a bit as a result of this issue. Perhaps yours will too.

Many wonderful writers have helped shape and write this special issue. From inception, they have provided feedback, suggestions, and, of course, their writing:

- Mary Anne Borge and Lenora Larson stepped forward to provide contrasting articles about the use of this popular nectar plant, agreeing to disagree.
- Charlotte Adelman wrote an overview of native butterfly bushes that might be used in the southwestern portions of the United States.
- Instars contributor Sal Levinson developed a nectar garden paper craft to compliment the issue’s theme.
- And many NABA members answered an online survey adding their own experiences and ideas to the great butterfly bush debate!

- Jane Hurwitz, Editor

Articles, gardening tips and observations, artwork, digital high resolution photographs, poetry and comments will be considered for publication. Please send self-addressed stamped envelope for items to be returned.

**Butterfly Gardener** is published quarterly by the North American Butterfly Association, Inc. (NABA). © 2012 by the North American Butterfly Association, Inc. All rights reserved. Views of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of NABA.

**Butterfly Gardener** welcomes advertising. Please write us at: *Butterfly Gardener*, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960; hurwitz@naba.org

**Membership Services**

For questions concerning membership issues, magazines, or changes of address, please write to NABA Membership Services, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960. Occasionally, members send membership dues in twice. Our policy in such cases, unless instructed otherwise, is to extend membership for an additional year.
ButterflyBush: Are There Better Alternatives?
Text and Photos by Mary Anne Borge

It’s all about the next generation: the caterpillars

There’s no denying that Orange Eye Butterflybush (Buddleja davidii), also frequently called butterfly bush, can be a lovely plant. In a sunny location it has attractive flowers, blooms for a long period of time, and may draw a variety of species of adult butterflies for nectaring. What more could a butterfly gardener want? What else is there to know?

What about caterpillars?

In Butterflies Through Binoculars, Jeffrey Glassberg says: “The most important factor contributing to the decline of butterfly species is habitat loss.” Glassberg also states: “For many uncommon butterflies the easiest way to locate colonies is to search for sites where the foodplant is common.” By foodplant, he means the plant(s) on which the next generation, the caterpillars, can feed and thrive. Perpetuation of butterfly species requires habitat that will support a butterfly’s full life cycle, not just the adult stage.

None of these sources identify butterfly bush as a foodplant for butterfly caterpillars. Does it provide food for the hungry caterpillars of any species of butterflies or moths native to North America?

A search of the Natural History Museum’s database of known host plants yields only one species of Lepidoptera present in North America that uses butterfly bush as a foodplant, the Buddleia Budworm Moth, present only in urban areas of California and thought to be introduced there. So it’s not a caterpillar foodplant.
Isn’t it enough that butterfly bush is a good nectar source?

It would be, except for one thing. The butterfly bush Plant Fact Sheet from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_buda2.pdf) includes a bright red warning, “Caution: This plant may become invasive.”

The USDA lists it as naturalized in 20 states, British Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This means it has escaped from gardens to surrounding natural areas, with the potential to crowd out native vegetation that is essential to wildlife, including butterflies and birds. It can be difficult to remove once it has established itself.

According to the USDA, butterfly bush (except for a few sterile cultivars) is prohibited for entry, transport, purchase, sale or propagation in the state of Oregon. It is prohibited from being propagated, released, displayed or sold in New Zealand, is listed as one of the top twenty weeds in Western Europe, and in 2007, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Bayscapes program listed it as a plant that should no longer be used for landscaping.¹

It’s not that butterfly bush is inherently a bad plant. It is native to China, not North America, Europe or New Zealand. The insects, birds and other residents with which it evolved in China and that depend on it for food there aren’t present in the areas in which it was introduced. So there are no species here that will naturally keep it in check. This is always a potential danger when a species is introduced in an environment in which it is not native, where its food web partners are missing.

A sterile cultivar might be worth a try, but they have a tendency to evolve back into a fertile state over time, so they may become a problem further down the road. Is it worth the risk?

There are better alternatives

The good news is that there are lots of great alternatives to butterfly bush.

For caterpillar food plants, consider trees and shrubs like Black Cherry, Tuliptree, Northern Spicebush, blueberries, Gray Dogwood, Ninebark, Hoptree and Pipevine, and herbaceous perennials including American or Maryland Senna, Blue Wild Indigo, violets, milkweeds and asters.

For nectar, in addition to the plants listed above, you can’t beat mountain mints, Common Buttonbush, and Coastal Sweetpepperbush. What thirsty butterfly could resist pink clouds of joe pye weed, bold purple New York Ironweed, or sunburst yellow coneflowers? From late summer through fall, the shimmering yellows of goldenrods and the many bright hues of asters are a prolific source of food for hungry butterflies and native bee species, while hosting many other insects that provide essential food for birds.

Listed above and pictured here are just a few of my personal favorites. Good sources of information about plants that will work well in your area include Attracting Native Pollinators by Mader, Shephard, Vaughan, Black and LeBuhn; Bringing Nature Home by Douglas W. Tallamy, and your state or regional native plant society.

We are all (except in Oregon and New Zealand!) free to choose. Would you like to have a chance to watch butterfly species successfully raise new generations on your property, and protect their habitat in the natural areas near you? Choose well, and you will have a continuously changing display of colorful blossoms to host adult butterflies from early spring through late fall.

Mary Anne Borge is a naturalist, writer, and photographer who lives in New Jersey. Follow her at www.the-natural-web.org

Plant Species – Scientific names

| Black Cherry | Prunus serotina |
| Tuliptree | Lindera benzoin |
| Northern Spicebush | Vaccinium corymbosum |
| blueberries | Vaccinium angustifolium |
| Gray Dogwood | Comus racemos |
| Common Ninebark | Physocarpus opulifolius |
| Common Hoptree | Ptelea trifoliata |
| Pipevine | Aristolochia macrophylla |
| American Senna, Maryland Senna | Senna hebecarpa |
| Blue Wild Indigo | Senna marilandica |
| Common Buttonbush | Baptisia australis |
| Coastal Sweetpepperbush | Cephalanthus occidentalis |
| joe pye weeds | Clethra alnifolia |
| New York Ironweed | Eupatorium fistulosus |
| Butterfly Milkweed | Eupatorium maculatum |
| Aromatic Aster | Eupatorium perfoliatum |
| Vernonia | Eupatorium purpureum |
| New Jersey Ironweed | Vernonia noveboracensis |
| Butterfly Milkweed | Asclepias tuberosa |
| Aromatic Aster | Symphyotrichum oblongifolium |

Butterfly Bush: Is it Right for You? A Survey

by Jane Hurwitz

In late April 2012, a survey was posted on NABA’s Facebook page to solicit information about how people used butterfly bush in their gardens. 83% of the respondents listed themselves as NABA members and all but six had an opinion on butterfly bush. While it was a decidedly unscientific survey, the respondents had many experiences with butterfly bush to share.

Out of 57 respondents, 6 did not grow butterfly bush and did not give a reason. One Pennsylvania respondent did not grow it because it was too invasive. A few mentioned being influenced by Douglas Tallamy’s book, Bringing Home Nature, and as a result have discontinued growing non-native plants. A few others stated that they use exclusively native plants in their gardens and have for quite some time. The remainder of the respondents used butterfly bush in some context, with many emphasizing that in addition to butterfly bush they grow as many native food plants as possible to provide for butterfly reproduction. Many respondents mentioned that at their locations butterfly bush was not invasive.

One survey question asked, “If you grow butterfly bush, what butterflies are the most common visitors to butterfly bush in your garden?” Since responses to the survey came from all over the United States, the answers to this question seemed to include just about every common garden butterfly.

Another survey question asked, “If you grow butterfly bush, what groups of butterflies that are present in your garden do not visit butterfly bush?” Again, given the large geographic sample, these responses contained just about every common garden butterfly. The apparent contradiction between the answers these two questions brings to mind the realtor’s mantra: Location! Location! Location! The geographic location you live in will determine what butterflies you see. The location of your butterfly bush in your garden will also determine what butterflies you see.

Yet another question asked, “Do you have a plant in your garden that is a good substitute nectar source for butterfly bush?” Lantana was the most commonly mentioned substitute. Milkweed and agastache were also commonly mentioned. One respondent wrote the following response which summarized how many other people answered this question: “ONLY seasonally. Common and Butterfly Milkweed are great for two weeks in May, Swamp Milkweed is good for two weeks in July/August, joe-pye weed is good for two weeks in August, and others for their shorter bloom seasons. In reality, only a few gardeners can provide a FULL season of nectar with all their plants, so butterfly bush is an easy way to provide nectar throughout the season in any yard or garden.”

75% of respondents grow butterfly bush in the full sun, and 76% report that the highest number of butterflies are seen in the afternoon.

Thanks to all who took the time to brief us on their butterfly gardening with butterfly bush!
and the flower’s shape should provide a landing strip and shallow nectaries to accommodate the butterfly’s relatively short tongue. The nectar should be plentiful, high in carbohydrates, and continually replenished.

*Buddleja* excels in every category. Butterflies easily access the copious nectar with a high concentration of sucrose. Reportedly, even the sterile hybrids are nectar-rich, but my experience is limited to the *Buddleja davidii* species, since my less vigorous hybrids died long ago in this unforgiving Kansas climate.

### A Native of China and Japan

Native Plant Absolutists gnash their teeth in frustration, but butterflies are not ideologues. They are pragmatists at the molecular level. If their foot’s chemical receptor and the molecule match, the plant’s origin is irrelevant. Why be so rigid? Our Regional Director of the Kansas Native Plant Society has a greenhouse and raises hundreds of butterfly bushes to sell at area Master Gardener plant sales. My sense of justice is offended by Americans who eat predominantly non-native foods, but would refuse that same pleasure to butterflies.

### Invasive Thug?

A more serious charge against *Buddleja* is its invasiveness, but this vice is not universal. Monarch Watch, the Monarch Migration Research Station at the University of Kansas, uses and promotes butterfly bush without invasive incidents. Powell Gardens, the prestigious Kansas City Botanical Garden, under the leadership of Alan Branhagen, Executive Director of Horticulture and author of *The Gardener’s Butterfly Book*, has been monitoring *Buddleja* for the past fifteen years. His experience shows that it may self-sow in disturbed areas, but never beyond the garden’s cultivated soil. I welcome a few volunteer seedlings each spring, but they never stray into my pastures or woodland. That said, gardeners in the Northeast and Northwest are understandably aghast that we Midwesterners remain steadfast in our support of butterfly bush. In those gentle climates, it can be an invasive, noxious weed.

### Solution: Rigorous Deadheading

Gardeners in at-risk states do not need to deny butterflies their favorite adult beverage. *Buddleja* spreads by seed, so if the flowers are deadheaded just as they start to wither, there will be no volunteers. Do you have the resolve and discipline? If not, look for another plant choice. If you can commit to religious deadheading, the butterflies and many other pollinators will thank you.
For the Love of Butterflies

Please photocopy this membership application form and pass it along to friends and acquaintances who might be interested in NABA.

Yes! I want to join NABA and receive American Butterflies and Butterfly Gardener and/or contribute to the creation of the premier butterfly garden in the world, NABA’s National Butterfly Center. The Center, located on approximately 100 acres of land fronting the Rio Grande in Mission, Texas, uses native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to create a spectacular natural butterfly garden that significantly benefits butterflies, an endangered ecosystem, and the people of the Rio Grande Valley.

Name: _________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________________________________________

Special Interests (circle): Listing, Gardening, Observation, Photography, Conservation, Other: ____________________________

Dues enclosed (circle): Regular $30 ($60 outside U.S., Canada or Mexico), Family $40 ($80 outside North America), Special sponsorship levels: Copper $50; Skipper $100; Admiral $250; Monarch $1000. Institution/Library subscription to all annual publications $50 ($80 outside U.S., Canada or Mexico). Special tax-deductible contributions to NABA (please circle): $125, $200, $1000, $5000. Mail checks (in U.S. dollars) to: NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960.

Article Submissions

Articles, gardening tips and observations, artwork, digital high resolution photographs, poetry and comments will be considered for publication. Contact Jane Hurwitz, Editor, hurwitz@naba.org

Advertising

Butterfly Gardener welcomes advertising. Please contact us for current rates and closing dates at naba@naba.org, or telephone 973.285.0907, or fax 973.285.0936

Memberships Services

If you have questions about duplicate magazines, missing magazines, membership expiration date, change of address, etc., please write to NABA Membership Services, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960. Occasionally, members send membership dues twice. Our policy in such cases, unless instructed differently, is to extend membership for an additional year. NABA sometimes exchanges or sells its membership list to like-minded organizations that supply services or products that might be of interest to members. If you would like your name deleted from membership lists we supply to others, please write and inform us at: NABA Membership Services, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960.
Butterfly Gardener. www.naba.org

“...The flowers’ only drawback seems to be their scent, described by some as “wet dog’s ear.”

Utah, Wand, and Escobilla Butterflybushes

Potentially garden-worthy native butterfly bush species include Utah Butterflybush (aka Panamint Butterflybush, or Summer Lilac) (*Buddleja utahensis*), which is native to parts of western North America, notably California. Like many of its relatives, this shrub features gray foliage and yellow flowers. The Texas or Wand Butterflybush (*Buddleja racemosa*) was first named and described in 1859 by John Torrey, and is native to parts of Texas. The Escobilla Butterflybush (*Buddleja scordioides*), native to parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Mexico, has been the subject of scientific studies to determine if useful chemicals can be extracted from the plant.

If respectfully protected, and more widely incorporated into its home regions in our gardens and landscapes, the native butterfly bush species promise to provide ornamental beauty and nectar for many of our nation’s important pollinators and also provide scientific benefits.


2. Ibid, 98,99.

Rio Grande Butterflybush is growing as a small tree/ large shrub in the gardens at the National Butterfly Center in Mission, TX. Rio Grande Butterflybush is propagated at the National Butterfly Center and is for sale in its nursery.

Do you grow any of the native butterfly bushes mentioned in this article? *Butterfly Gardener Magazine* would be interested to hear your experiences of gardening with any of these plants.

Email: nababutterflygardener@gmail.com

Photo right: Utah Butterflybush (*Buddleja utahensis*)

INSTARS: Nectar Garden Papercraft by Sal Levinson

Everybody loves seeing butterflies and flowers together. That is why nectar gardens are so popular. Many plants make good nectar sources. But some nectar plants can become weeds. *Buddleja* can become weedy in Washington and Oregon. Lantana is a weed in Hawaii. Dandelions are common lawn weeds. But butterflies love these plants. How can we provide for the needs of butterflies while also dealing with the problems caused by these plants?

Papercraft instructions:

Make a machine copy of the papercraft.

Color the plants and the house.

Cut out card and plants on bold lines

Fold card on dashed lines, unprinted sides together

Cut the six parallel bold lines to make slits

Refold the card on dashed lines, printed sides together. Unfold.

Pinch the center of the elbows on the dotted lines, unprinted sides together.

Fold the bases of the elbows on the dashed lines, printed sides together.

Fold and crease the card so the popups work smoothly.

Glue the *Buddleja* to the center popup elbow.

Glue the lantana to a popup elbow on the left side.

Glue the aster to the popup elbow on the right side.

All done! Do you remember the names of the nectar plants?

As an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, Sal Levinson studied Conservation of Natural Resources. After graduating, she held several insect related jobs working in the fields of central California, the forests of Connecticut and Idaho, and the labs of Berkeley, discovering and developing her interests in bugs. Sal pursued graduate work in entomology at UC Riverside and at UC Berkeley. She takes pleasure in sharing her interest in butterflies via teacher trainings, educational workshops, presentations, publications and, as of last year, butterfly walks at the UC Botanical Garden.