



Habitat Gardening in Central New York

hgcnyc.org
facebook.com/hgcnyc
ourhabitatgarden.org
info@hgcnyc.org
(315) 487-5742

Monarchs & other butterflies

IMPORTANT: Butterflies are insects and insecticides will kill them. Don't use pesticides if you want butterflies! And don't buy plants treated with systemic pesticides such as neonicotinoids (Ex. Safari and others). They permeate the plant, don't wash off, and their toxicity persists in the soil.

Milkweeds for monarch caterpillars

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*): medium to wet soil; sun to part shade; 2-4 ft; pink flowers; doesn't spread

Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*): wet to dry; sun to part sun; 2-4 ft; pink, wonderfully fragrant; will spread

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*): medium to dry well-drained soil; sun to part sun; 1-3 ft; orange

Some host plants for CNY butterflies

A *host plant* is the food for the butterfly's **caterpillar** stage. No host plant, no caterpillars; no caterpillars, no butterflies!

Pipevine swallowtail – pipevine

Black swallowtail – zizia, dill, parsley, carrot, fennel

Giant swallowtail – prickly ash, common rue

Spicebush swallowtail – spicebush, sassafras, tulip tree

Tiger swallowtail – wild black cherry, tulip tree

Clouded sulphur – clovers, alfalfa, black locusts

Cloudless sulphur – sennas, clovers, legumes

Brown elfin – blueberries, bearberries

Banded hairstreak – oaks, hickories, butternut

Gray hairstreak – mallows

Eastern tailed blue – clovers, legumes, baptisia

Spring azure – dogwood, NJ tea, wild cherry

Hackberry, Tawny emperor – hackberry tree

Mourning cloak – willow, elm, poplar, birch, hackberry

Comma – hops, nettles, elms

Question mark – nettles, hops, hackberry, elm

American Lady – pussytoes, pearly everlasting, ironweed

Fritillaries (Meadow, Great spangled) – violets

Baltimore checkerspot – white turtlehead, penstemon

Crescents (Northern, Pearl) – asters

White admiral – birches, aspen, poplars

Red admiral – nettles

Silver-spotted skipper – black locust, woody legumes

Dreamy Duskywing – willows, poplar, aspen, birch

Nessus sphinx moth – grapes

Hummingbird moth – honeysuckle, hawthorn, *Prunus*

Polyphemus moth – oaks willow, maple, birch

Cecropia moth – sugar maple, cherries/plums, dogwoods

Luna moth – white birch, hickories, walnuts, sumacs

Native nectar plants for all butterflies

Include plants (esp. species, *not cultivars*) that bloom in spring and summer and fall for the adult butterflies.

Plant **large** patches. And plant **lots** of patches.

NOTE: Buddleia (aka butterfly bush) is NOT recommended! It's not native and can be invasive.

Some SPRING nectar sources:

Wild plums / wild cherries (*Prunus spp.*)

Blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*)

Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

Violets (*Viola spp.*)

Some SUMMER nectar sources:

Milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*)

Coneflowers (*Echinacea spp.*)

Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*), bergamot (*M. fistulosa*)

New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)

Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)

Coreopsis/Tickseed (*Coreopsis spp.*)

Sunflowers (*Helianthus spp.*)

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Some FALL nectar sources:

Joe-pye weed, boneset, snakeroot (*Eupatorium spp.*)

Gayfeather, blazing star (*Liatris spp.*)

Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) They do NOT cause allergies!

New England, New York asters (*Aster spp.*)

Black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia spp.*)

New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)

Other foods for some butterflies

* Sap from wounded trees

* Rotting fruit e.g. from shrubs with excess berries that rot

* Even urine, dung, bird droppings for some butterflies

Overwintering sites

Depending on the species, butterflies overwinter as eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises, or as adult butterflies, so leave some logs, leaf litter, debris etc. around your yard year-round so they have a place to stay.

Don't be a landscaping neat-nik! (And they do NOT need — nor use — “butterfly houses”!)

Resources

Xerces Society *Gardening for Butterflies* – Excellent!
Rea, Ba et.al. *Milkweed, Monarchs and More*

Monarch Watch: monarchwatch.org

Journey North: journeynorth.org

Monarch Joint Venture: monarchjointventure.org

Wild Ones “Wild for Monarchs” program: wildones.org

Our Habitat Garden, a local CNY habitat garden with sections on butterflies and on monarchs:

ourhabitatgarden.org

Plants recommended by The Xerces Society's Gardening for Butterflies

Scientific Name	Common Name	Nectar	Host for Butterflies / Skippers / Moths
TREES, SHRUBS			
<i>Quercus (spp)</i>	Oaks	N	LOTS!!!
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Chokecherry	Y	LOTS!!! Cecropia; Swallowtail etc
<i>Salix discolor</i>	Pussy willow	Limited	LOTS!!!
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Black elderberry	Limited	Spring azure
<i>Gaylussacia baccata</i>	Black huckleberry	Y	Brown elfin; Sphinx moths
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	Y	Sphinx moths
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey tea	Y	Duskywing; Spring azure; Summer azure
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Hibiscus	N	Skippers; hairstreaks; moths
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush	N	Moths; Eastern tiger and Spicebush swallowtails
HERBACEOUS			
<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Scarlet beebalm	Y	Sphinx
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild bergamot	Y	Hermit sphinx; Moths
<i>Eupatoriadelphus maculatus</i>	Spotted Joe-pye	Y	Moths
<i>Eupatoriadelphus purpureus</i>	Sweet Joe-pye	Y	Moths
<i>Eupatoriadelphus fistulosus</i>	Hollow joe-pye	Y	Moths
<i>Cirsium muticum</i>	Swamp thistle	Y	Painted Lady; Swamp metalmark
<i>Cirsium discolor</i>	Pasture thistle	Y	Painted Lady
<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Va. Mtn. Mint	Y	?
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Wild lupine	N	Many, inc. Karner Blue
<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>	Wingstem	Y	Gold moth; Silvery checkerspot
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	Wrinkleleaf goldenrod	Y	?
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Brown-eyed susan	Limited	Checkerspot
<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	Blue flossflower	Y	?
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue vervain	Y	Common buckeye
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed	Y	Monarchs; Tiger moth; Tussock moth; Queen
<i>Viola sororia</i>	Common blue violet	Y	Fritillaries
<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Dense blazing star	Y	?
<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Evening primrose	Y	Primrose moth; Sphinx moth
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Foxglove beardtongue	Y	?
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden alexander	Y	Black swallowtail
<i>Lespedeza hirta</i>	Hairy bush clover	N	Moths; Sulphur; ETC. ETC. ETC.!!
<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>	Round-head bush clover	N	Many hairstreaks ETC.
<i>Symphitrichum novae-angliae</i>	New England aster	Y	Pearl crescent
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	Pearly everlasting	Y	Painted Lady; American Lady
<i>Boehmeria cylindrica</i>	Small spike false nettle	N	Comma, Question mark; Red admiral
VINES			
<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Va. Snakeroot		Pipevine swallowtail
GRASSES (many can also serve as pupation and overwintering sites)			
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	N	Skippers
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	N	Skippers
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	N	Skippers
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie dropseed	N	Skippers
<i>Tridens flavens</i>	Purpletop	N	Skippers; Wood nymph; Little glassywing
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	N	Skippers
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted hairgrass	N	Skippers
<i>Carex stricta</i>	Tussock sedge	N	Skippers