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## Monarchs & other butterflies

**VERY 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). They permeate the plant, don't wash off, and their toxicity persists even in the soil.

### Native nectar plants

Include plants (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
- \* 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 so they have a place to stay. **Don't be a landscaping neat-nik and don't clean up too soon in spring!** (And they do NOT need -- nor use -- "butterfly houses"!)

### Host plants for butterflies and moths

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

### Milkweeds for monarch caterpillars

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

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

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

### Host plants for some other species

**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

**Am. 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, dogwood

**Luna moth** - white birch, hickories, walnuts, sumacs

### Resources

Xerces Society Gardening for Butterflies - Excellent!

Rea, Ba et.al. Milkweed, Monarchs and More

Monarch Watch: [monarchwatch.org/](http://monarchwatch.org/)

Journey North: [journeynorth.org/](http://journeynorth.org/)

Monarch Joint Venture: [monarchjointventure.org/](http://monarchjointventure.org/)

Wild Ones: [wildones.org/wild-for-monarchs/](http://wildones.org/wild-for-monarchs/)