

## Butterflies can be mostly free —



*Monarch butterfly.*

Photo by The Nature Conservancy

# If you use the proper plants

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KELLY GREENS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Butterfly gardening is a way to conserve the natural environment and bring butterflies, insects and other wildlife back to human-invaded areas through plant gardening. When land is plowed and pushed up, native plants are mostly destroyed in the building process and replanted with exotic or popular species to man. By designing and building a butterfly garden using native plants, you not only help bring back the population of butterflies, but you will add a lot of beauty and color to your property.

Butterfly gardening works like this: Butterflies are equipped with a keen sense of smell and are able to identify food plants from quite a distance. If you use the proper plants, it won't be long before butterflies make your home or golf course, their home. The selection of plants is very important for having a successful butterfly garden. There are flowering plants that provide nectar necessary for adult butterflies. Nectar is a sweet sugary substance produced by flowers. There are also host plants that provide food for the larva or caterpillar. Because

caterpillars are particularly choosy eaters, host plants must be chosen carefully. Most species of butterflies will only lay eggs on one species of plant. So, it is important to choose the proper plants for the butterflies present in your area.

Some of the most common and easiest butterflies to find host plants for in South Florida consist of Giant Swallowtails, Black Swallowtails, Zebras, Julias, Queens, Monarch, the Gulf Fritillary and many Whites and Yellows (Sulphurs). See chart below for species of butterfly and preferred host plants for them.

When designing your garden, be sure to determine the full-grown size of the plants that you are going to use so that you can plant them and don't have to cut off flowers to maintain a feasible height.

Also, try to keep most of the garden in the full sun and preferably out of strong winds (next to fence or hedge). Butterflies prefer large blots of colors and strong accents. Once you start seeing butterflies in your garden, make note of the butterfly and what host plant they are on and watch those plants for the next three or four days. You should see tiny caterpillars emerge

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# Florida Native Wildflowers to Provide Nectar

## Perennials

milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.)  
 asters (*Aster* spp.)  
 Blazing star (*Liatris* spp.)  
 Boneset (*Eupatorium* spp.)  
 False ageratum (*E. coelestinum*)  
 Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.)  
 Ironweed (*Vernonia* spp.)  
 Florida Paintbrush (*Carphephorus corymbosus*)  
 Pennyroyal (*Piloblephis rigida*)  
 Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)  
 Stoke's aster (*Stokesia laevis*)  
 Vervain (*Glandularia* spp.)  
 Wild petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*)

## Annuals

Spanish needles, or beggars ticks (*Bidens alba*)  
 Seaside heliotrope (*Heliotropium curassavicum*)  
 beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*)

## Biennials

Black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)  
 Thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*)

## Shrubs

flatwoods plum (*Prunus umbellata*)  
 sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*)  
 Blue porterweed (*Stachytarpheta* spp.)  
 Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)  
 Garberia (*Garberia fruticosa*)  
 Lantana (*Lantana* spp.)  
 Wild sage (*L. involucrata*)  
 New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)  
 Tarflower (*Befaria racemosa*)

## Florida Larval Plants

Asters (*Aster* spp.)  
 Cannas (*Canna* spp.)  
 Carrot family (*Umbelliferae*)  
 Citrus family (*Rutaceae*)  
 Coontie (*Zamia floridana*)  
 Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolchia* spp.)  
 Figs (*Ficus* spp.)

Laurel family (*Lauraceae*)  
 Legume family (*Fabaceae*)  
 Milkweed family (*Asclepiadaceae*)  
 Mustard family (*Brassicaceae*)  
 Passionvine (*Passiflora* spp.)  
 Pawpaw (*Asimina* spp.)  
 Senna & Partridge Pea (*Cassia* spp.)  
 Water hyssop (*Bacopa* spp.)

*This is a partial listing of native plants found throughout Florida that attract butterflies. For more specific information regarding your region, call your county extension office or the Florida Native Plant Society, (407) 299-1472.*

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## Chart 1: Florida Butterflies

Name	Characteristics	Food Sources	Florida Location
<b>SWALLOWTAILS</b> 10 Florida species			
Zebra Swallowtail	Long winged, white w/dark stripes & red spot on lower hind wings	pawpaws	All
Black Swallowtail	Small, dark rows of yellow spots, iridescent blue spots on hind wings	carrot family	All
Giant Swallowtail	Large, black & yellow	citrus family	All
Pipevine Swallowtail	Medium, dark w/iridescent blue on hind wings	various species of Dutchman's pipe	Common north of Fort Myers
Spicebush Swallowtail	Large, dark, row of yellow spots on wings, orange spot on upper edge of hind wing	laurel family, including spicebush	All
<b>SULFURS AND WHITES</b> 19 Florida Species			
Checkered White	Medium, white, checkered w/brown markings	mustard spp. including peppergrass	All
Cloudless Sulfur	Large, yellow	cassia spp.	All
Great Southern White	Large, white, dark markings on tips of fore wings	salt tolerant mustards	Coastal Peninsular Florida
Little Sulfur	Small, bright yellow, brown markings on fore wings	cassia spp.	All
Sleepy Orange	Rich-orange, dark brown bands	cassia spp.	All
<b>HAIRSTREAKS AND BLUES</b>			
Atala	Rare, once thought extinct, blue w/dark wing edges & bright orange abdomen	coontie	Extreme South
Gray Hairstreak	Small, dull gray, orange spots on lower hind wings	oaks, hawthorns, mainly pea & mallow spp.	All
Red-banded Hairstreak	Tiny, dark gray fore wings & blue markings on hind wings	wax myrtle & oaks	All
Spring Azure	Tiny, blue	woody trees & shrubs	North Florida south to Gainesville
White Hairstreak	Blue, black wing border, white M marking on hind wing	various oaks	All
<b>METALMARKS</b> 1 Florida Species			
Little Metalmark	Small, copper-colored	thistles	All
<b>SNOUT BUTTERFLIES</b> 1 Florida Species			
Snout Butterfly	Long pointed noses, orange & brown w/white spots on upper wing tips	sugarberry, other hackberry trees	All

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from eggs. These caterpillars will feed on your plant and can sometimes destroy it quickly, so observe them daily. Remove the overload and replace them, either on other plants of the same species or give some to a friend. Most elementary schools would love to have them so students can observe the caterpillars change to *chrysalis* or pupa stage and then to a beautiful butterfly.

#### More butter fly garden tips:

- ◆ Plant with year round blooms in mind and in sunny, warm

locations.

- ◆ Butterflies are cold blooded, and can fly only when their body temperatures are between 85 - 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Try placing rocks in open sunny areas of your garden as "basking" sites.

- ◆ Butterflies, like all wildlife, depend on food, water and cover. Understanding their habitat needs is necessary for a successful garden.

- ◆ At least one and preferably more watering areas should be

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## Chart 2: Florida Butterflies

Name	Characteristics	Food Sources	Florida Location
<b>BRUSHFOOTED BUTTERFLIES</b> 23 Florida Species			
American Painted Lady	Medium, orange w/brown, white & blue markings abundant in spring & fall	aster family	All
Buckeye	Medium brown w/purple eyespots on wings	plantains, matchheads, false foxglove & wild petunia	All
Gulf Fritillary	Bright orange w/black & silver spots	passion vines	All
Julia	orange-brown, likes edge of woodlands	passion vines	South Florida
Ruddy Daggerwing	rich orange w/thin brown lines, long thin tails, likes woodland edges	various figs	South Florida
White Peacock	medium, orange brown, dark spots & wavy lines on wings, likes moist areas	water hyssop, occasionally wild petunia	Florida Peninsula
Zebra Longwing	Black w/bold yellow stripes, likes edge of wooded areas	passion vines	All
<b>GOATWEED BUTTERFLIES</b> 4 Florida Species			
Florida Leafwing	Rare, medium orange-brown, mostly forest dwellers	hackberry trees	Miami area south through the Keys
Hackberry Butterfly	Medium, orange brown	hackberry trees	All
<b>NYPHHS AND SATYRS</b> 8 Florida species			
	small to medium, shades of brown, likes woodlands and edges	various grasses	all
<b>MONARCH BUTTERFLIES</b> 3 Florida Species			
Monarch	Boldly marked, orange & black, usually near coast, toxin absorbed from milkweed plants protects from predators	exotic scarlet milkweed & native milkweed vine	All
Queen	Chestnut orange w/dark margin around wings & small white spots	milkweed	All
Tropic Queen	Orange 2/black markings	milkweed	All
<b>GIANT SKIPPERS</b> 2 Florida Species			
	Large, moth like, dark brown w/gold markings	yucca spp.	
<b>SKIPPERS</b> 65 Florida Species			
Long-tailed Skipper	Medium, brown, w/long green tails	variety of legumes, including green beans	All

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included in your garden. Try a clay pot saucer with sand added and a rock in the middle, or create a depression in and around your garden and either keep water in it or let rain replenish it.

◆ Don't place your garden in an area difficult to get to or to see. Try a garden around the clubhouse, pro shop or practice putting green.

◆ Eliminate all chemical applications in garden area.

For more information on butterfly gardening, contact The Xerces Society  
10 Southwest Ash Street

Portland, Oregon 97204

North American Butterfly Assoc.  
39 Highland Avenue  
Chappaqua, NY 10514

You can also contact your local county extension agent for information on butterflies in your area.

If you're in Coconut Creek and have the time, stop by **Butterfly World** for an up-close look. West Sample Road, (305) 977-4400.