










Butterfly Gardening Tips

When creating your own butterfly garden, here are a few tips that can help make your garden enjoyable to both you and butterflies:

-  Most butterflies like the sun. Locate the sunniest area possible to start your garden. A few butterflies will be found on the edge of the woods, but they need open areas to fly.
-  Perhaps the biggest tip is Do Not Use Any Pesticides. A butterfly garden is to be appreciated for its natural beauty. Not only will pesticide rid your garden of butterflies, it also will kill off natural predators and other beneficial insects. Observe and appreciate your garden for what it is: a sanctuary where animals and plants interact naturally.
-  Try to build your garden in an area protected from the wind. It's hard for butterflies to move about in strong winds. Trellises, rows of dense shrubs or short brick walls can help provide shelter for butterflies. Protected areas also allow for the natural feeding and egg laying of butterflies.
-  Plan your garden so there are clusters of flowers. Butterflies have poor eyesight (at least for locating objects at a distance). It's easier for them to notice large groupings of colors and shapes when planted together. Each cluster also will provide lots of nectar for the adults.
-  A bowl of wet sand or mud puddles often are appreciated. Male butterflies love to congregate around watering holes.
-  Rotting fruit and tree sap also are great attractants to certain types of butterflies. As an added bonus, try adding a few rocks to your garden and spread this concoction on them: Mix mashed rotten bananas, molasses, sugar, stale beer and fruit juices. It's a recipe only a butterfly could love.
-  Incorporate plants of different but overlapping blooming seasons. Try plants that can serve as host plants for eggs and caterpillars as well as nectar sources for adult butterflies.
-  Do some homework when picking plants for your garden. Watch the butterflies in your area to see what flowers they are on and incorporate those into your garden. Know how much sun is needed, height, bloom time and hardiness zone of the plants. Some plants may need room to spread. Others may require precautions so they don't spread out of control. Some plants will need certain soil type to grow. Check with your local nurseries to see if they carry the plants or can order them for you.
-  If you plant flowers to attract butterflies, you also will attract other insects. All types of bees will show up on plants that are nectar sources for butterflies. Some plants also attract birds.
-  Find a good butterfly book. Some to consider: *Stokes Butterfly Book: The Complete Guide to Butterfly Gardening, Identification, and Behavior* by Donald & Lillian Stokes and Ernest Williams; *Butterflies: How to Identify and Attract Them to Your Garden* by Marcus Schneck; *Butterflies through Binoculars, The East* by Jeffrey Glassberg; *A Peterson Field Guide To Eastern Butterflies* by Paul A. Opler and Vichai Malikul



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