

Butterfly Gardening With Native Florida Plants

Natural Resources

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Introduction

Florida is home to a wonderful variety of butterfly species. In fact, there are over 180 species of butterflies found in Florida including 40 that are only found in Florida (endemic). Planting a garden for butterflies is a great way to observe these fluttering flyers. A butterfly garden does not have to be a huge, expensive and labor-intensive endeavor. Even a small attempt to provide some basic butterfly needs will be quickly rewarded.

A butterfly garden provides food for both the larvae (caterpillars) and adult butterflies. Most adult butterflies depend on sugar-rich flower nectar, but to ensure a healthy and persistent population of different species, providing larval food plants is important as well. Some caterpillars are very particular to what plants they need to grow and eventually change into butterflies. Some plants provide food for both larval and adult stages. Below is a list of common Florida butterflies and their larval/adult host plants.

Native Florida Nectar Plants

Using plants native to your region is a great way to provide the needs of local butterflies. Many Florida natives produce showy flowers that are suited for any flower/butterfly garden. On the next page you will find a short list to get you started. Please refer to the EDIS publication cited at the end of this fact-sheet for a more complete list.

All of the plants listed are easy to grow in full sun and average garden soil. Supplemental irrigation should only be necessary when new plants are being established.



A Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanilla*) feeds on turkey tangle fogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*)

Basic Outline for Designing Your Garden

- Choose a sunny location that you can see from inside and is convenient for maintenance.
- Include nectar plants to attract adult butterflies and host plants for the butterflies to lay their eggs upon.
- Be sure to provide several of each plant you choose - caterpillars can be very hungry!
- Do not use pesticides in or near your butterfly garden.
- Enjoy watching the butterflies!

Butterfly	Larval Host Plant(s)	Adult Food Resources
Black Swallowtail (<i>Papilio polyxenes</i>)	Parsley*, Dill*, Fennel*, Bishopweed	Shrubs Button Bush - <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> Firebush - <i>Hamelia patens</i> Inkberry - <i>Ilex glabra</i> Wildflowers Milkweed - <i>Asclepias</i> spp. Florida Paintbrush - <i>Carphephorus</i> spp. Blanket Flower - <i>Gallardia pulchella</i> Sunflowers – <i>Helianthus</i> spp. Blazing Star – <i>Liatris</i> spp. Horsemint – <i>Monarda punctata</i> Fogfruit – <i>Phyla nodiflora</i> Black-eyed Susan – <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Sage – <i>Salvia</i> spp. Goldenrod – <i>Solidago</i> spp.
Cloudless Sulphur (<i>Phoebis sennae</i>)	Cassia, Partridge Pea	
Giant Swallowtail (<i>Heraclides cresphontes</i>)	Citrus*	
Gulf Fritillary (<i>Agraulis vanillae</i>)	Passion Vines	
Monarch (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	Milkweed, Butterfly Weed	
Orange-Barred Sulphur (<i>Phoebis philea</i>)	Cassia, Partridge Pea	
Pipeline Swallowtail (<i>Battus philenor</i>)	Pipevines	
Polydamus Swallowtail (<i>Battus polydamus</i>)	Pipeline	
Queen (<i>Danaus gilippus</i>)	Milkweed, Twinvine, Milkvine	
Tiger Swallowtail (<i>Papilio glaucus</i>)	Sweet Bay Magnolia, Ash, Black Cherry	
White Peacock (<i>Anartia jatrophae</i>)	Water Hyssop, Turkey Tangle Fogfruit	
Zebra Longwing (<i>Heliconius charithonia</i>)	Passion Vines	

Additional Resources:

Butterfly Gardening in Florida: EDIS Publication WEC 22. www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw057

Getting Started in Butterfly Gardening: EDIS Publication ENY722. www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN56400.pdf

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