

PLANT SOURCES FOR BUTTERFLY LARVAE

(all native to Connecticut)

Compiled by North Central Conservation District, Ruth Klue

Woody Plants:

American Hornbeam	<u>Carpinus caroliniana</u>	
Ashes	<u>Fraxinus</u> species	(host to Tiger Swallowtail)
Azaleas, native deciduous	<u>Rhododendron</u> sp.	(host to the Gray Comma)
Birchs	<u>Betula</u> sp.	(host to Mourning Cloak, Red Admiral, Dreamy Duskywings)
Black Chokeberry	<u>Aronia melanocarpa</u>	(host to the Coral Hairstreak)
Black Huckleberry	<u>Gaylussacia baccata</u>	
Blueberries	<u>Vaccinium</u> species	
Dogwoods	<u>Cornus</u> species	(host to Spring Azure, Common Blue)
Eastern Red Cedar	<u>Juniperus virginiana</u>	
Hackberry Tree	<u>Celtis occidentalis</u>	(host to Question Mark, Mourning Cloak, Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor)
Oaks	<u>Quercus</u> species	(host to Banded Hairstreaks)
Sweetbay Magnolia	<u>Magnolia virginiana</u>	(host to Tiger Swallowtail)
New Jersey Tea	<u>Ceanothus americanus</u>	(host to Spring Azure, Common Blue)
Cherries, Plums	<u>Prunus</u> species (native)	(host to Coral Hairstreak, Tiger Swallowtail, Red-Spotted Purple)
Spicebush	<u>Lindera benzoin</u>	(host to Spicebush Swallowtail)
Sumac	<u>Rhus</u> species	(host to Spring Azure)
Tulip Tree	<u>Liriodendron</u>	(host to Tiger Swallowtail)
Viburnum	<u>Viburnum</u> species	(host to Spring Azure, Common Blue)
White Pine	<u>Pinus strobus</u>	
Willow	<u>Salix</u> species	(host to Mourning Cloak, Viceroy, Dreamy Duskywings)
Winterberry	<u>Ilex verticillata</u>	(host to Henry's Elfin)

Perennial Plants:

Alexanders	<u>Zizia</u> species	
Asters	<u>Aster</u> species	(host to Pearl Crescent)
Black Cohosh	<u>Cimicifuga</u> species	
Milkweeds	<u>Asclepias</u> species	(host to Monarch)
Monkey flower	<u>Mimulus ringens</u>	(host to Common Buckeye)
Sedges	<u>Carex</u> species	(host to Dun Skipper)
Sunflower	<u>Helianthus</u> species	(host to Patined Lady, silvery Checkerspot)

Switchgrass	<u>Panicum virgatum</u>	(host to Skippers)
Violets	<u>Viola</u> species	(host to Great Spangled and Meadow Fritillaries)
White Turtlehead	<u>Chelone glabra</u>	(host to Baltimore Checkerspot)
Wild Columbine	<u>Aquilegia canadensis</u>	(host to Columbine duskywing)

PLANT SOURCES FOR BUTTERFLY NECTAR

Woody Plants:

Azaleas, native deciduous	<u>Rhododendron</u> species
Bayberry	<u>Myrica pensylvanica</u>
Buttonbush	<u>Cephalanthus occidentalis</u>
Cherries, Plums	<u>Prunus</u> species
Dogwoods	<u>Cornus</u> species
Elderberry	<u>Sambucus canadensis</u>
Hackberry	<u>Celtis occidentalis</u>
Laurels	<u>Kalmia</u> species
New Jersey Tea	<u>Ceanothus americanus</u>
Roses (native)	<u>Rosa palustris, virginiana</u> , etc.
Sweet Pepperbush	<u>Clethra alnifolia</u>
Shadbush	<u>Amelanchier</u>
Spicebush	<u>Lindera benzoin</u>
Spirea (Meadowsweet, Steeplebush)	<u>Spiraea</u> species
Sumacs	<u>Rhus</u> species
Sweetspire	<u>Itea virginica</u>
Winterberry	<u>Ilex verticillata</u>

Perennial Plants:

Anise hyssop	<u>Agastache foeniculum</u>
Asters	<u>Aster</u> species
Beard Tongue	<u>Penstemon digitalis, hirsutus</u>
Bee Balm	<u>Monarda</u> species
Black-eyed Susan	<u>Rudbeckia fulgida, hirta, laciniata</u>
Blazing Star	<u>Liatris</u> species
Blue Lobelia	<u>Lobelia siphilitica</u>
Blue Flag Iris	<u>Iris versicolor</u>
Boneset	<u>Eupatorium perfoliatum</u>
Cardinal flower	<u>Lobelia cardinalis</u>
Coreopsis	<u>Coreopsis verticillata, rosea</u> ('Moonbeam' sterile, not attractive)

Culver's Root	<u>Veronicastrum virginicum</u>
Geranium	<u>Geranium maculatum</u>
Goldenrod	<u>Solidago</u> species
Joe Pye Weed	<u>Eupatorium perfoliatum</u>
Indian Grass	<u>Sorghastrum nutans</u>
Ironweed	<u>Vernonia noveboracensis</u>
Little Blue Stem	<u>Schizachyrium scoparium</u>
Mallow	<u>Hibiscus</u> species
Marsh Marigold	<u>Caltha palustris</u>
Milkweeds	<u>Asclepias</u> species
Mountain Mint	<u>Pycnanthemum</u> species
Ox-Eye Daisy	<u>Heliopsis</u> species
Phlox	<u>Phlox divaricatus</u> , <u>paniculata</u> , <u>subulata</u>
Purple Coneflower	<u>Echinacea purpurea</u>
Sneezeweed	<u>Helenium</u> species
Sunflower	<u>Helianthus</u> species
Wild Columbine	<u>Aquilegia canadensis</u>

Grasses are important for many butterflies for nectar and overwintering. In a meadow, have two-thirds grasses. Mow every three years to prevent woody vegetation from taking over. Seedheads are important over winter, so don't mow until early spring. Remove invasives

There is enormous habitat change that is dramatically reducing the kinds and numbers of butterflies in Connecticut, and elsewhere.

The Four Stages of Butterfly Life: The Metamorphosis

- 1. Eggs**
- 2. Larval (caterpillar)**
- 3. Chrysalis**
- 4. Adult**

Butterfly Needs through the Life Cycle:

Food

Eggs are laid on a larval host plant that hatched larvae prefer to feed on as caterpillars.

If larvae are provided for, butterflies will reside on site, not just pass through.

Caterpillars chew their food. Don't kill the caterpillars: Chewed leaves won't harm the plant.

Adult butterflies drink nectar from flowers

They're especially attracted to brightly-colored flowers with flat tops, which give easy access for landing and feeding.

Single flowers are easier to get nectar from than double blossoms for butterflies, as are short rather than long flower tubes

Colors most attractive to butterflies: red, yellow, orange, pink/purple

Large numbers of the same species should be planted, because butterflies are attracted to massed color.

The role of native plants

Butterflies and native plants co-evolved, dependent upon each other for survival. Flower nectar is provided to butterflies, and butterflies pollinate flowers.

Many species use only one or two plant species and won't survive if those plants are unavailable.

Some "weedy" plants are critical to certain butterfly species.

Butterflies are extremely sensitive to pesticides, even Bt. Do not use pesticides in the vicinity of the butterfly site.

Water

Butterflies don't like open water, e.g., a pond or a birdbath

Butterflies do "puddling": they land on a damp area and drink without drowning, and take up salts and minerals simultaneously

To create a "puddle":

Take advantage of or construct low areas designed to remain damp.
Line the puddle with plastic, and place rocks on top.
Try to keep water in the puddle during hot dry periods.
Add a little manure for additional minerals.

For those with ponds or streams, the puddling area can be designed as a vegetated filter above the pond or stream that also functions to keep pond water clean.

Shelter and the Climatic Environment

Butterflies can't produce their own body heat.

They need sun at least 5-6 hours a day, and a southern exposure is ideal.

They need some protection from wind (also because of their delicate wings). Provide a sheltered spot, protected by trees or a hedge.

Provide flat rocks that get morning sun, and are protected from the wind. Butterflies need to warm up in the morning before capable of active flight

Constant visits by numerous humans will discourage butterflies.

Butterflies overwinter, some as adults, many as eggs. They use large trees with deep bark crevices, hollow logs, rocks with crevices, etc.