

Butterfly Gardening



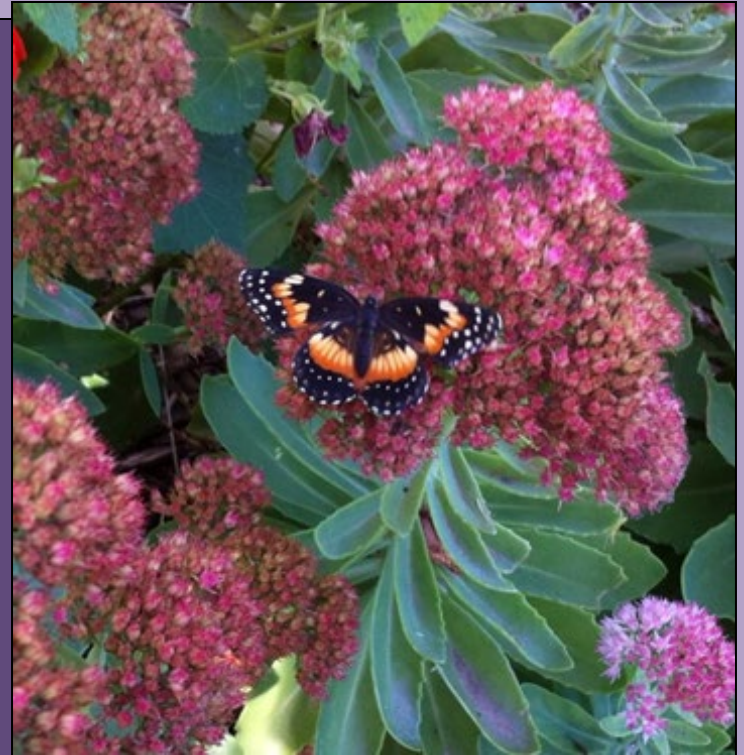
in the Big Country



Sulfurs, queen, and painted lady enjoy lavender

The Keys to Success!

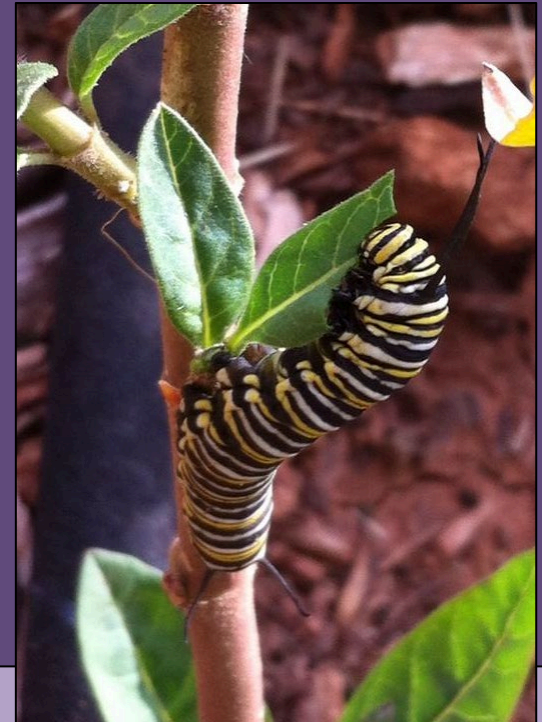
- Go native
- Host Plants
- Nectar plants
- Friendly
Environment



Border Patch on Sedum

Why Natives?

- Most butterflies have a close relationship to the plants they have developed with for millennia.
- Some imported plants can be harmful to native butterflies.
- Native plants can also handle our delightful Texas climate and pests .



Monarch caterpillar
enjoying some milkweed

Don't start from scratch.

- Add some natives to your existing garden.
- As you replace plants, go with native species.



Crescents on blackfoot daisy

Host Plants

- You can't have butterflies without caterpillars.
- Host plants attract butterflies to your garden and keep them coming back.
- Watching butterflies leaving their chrysalis can be lots of fun.



Swallowtail
caterpillars on dill



Top Host Plants

1. **Fennell, dill, parsley, rue:** black and tiger swallowtails
2. **Milkweed:** monarchs, queens.
3. **Passion vine:** fritillaries
4. **Hollyhocks and asters:** painted lady
5. **Ruellia, acanthus, snapdragon, frogfruit:** buckeyes
6. **Sunflowers:** bordered patch, checker spot, and dainty sulphur

Swallowtail on verbena



Trees are Host Plants, too.

- **Oak** : various dusky wings and hairstreaks
- **Willow**: viceroy, western tiger swallowtail, mourning cloak, red-spotted purple
- **Hackberry**: question mark, hackberry and tawny emperor
- **Honey Mesquite**: ceraunus, Reakirt's, and marine blues



Question mark butterfly

For an extensive list of host plants and the butterflies who love to eat them, check: dallasbutterflies.com



Emperor on horsemint



Fritillary on pentas

Nectar Plants

- Butterflies like flowers that have a surface they can land on.
- Compound or composite flowers like sunflowers and daisies provide butterflies with more bang for their buck.

The center of a composite flower is actually made up of lots of little flowers



- Butterflies prefer purple, pink, yellow, and white. Though they do seem to have individual preferences.
- But they are actually attracted more to smell than color.
- Plant in groups so you get clumps of color.



Checkered white
on coreopsis

- Shoot for as long a bloom period as possible.
- Watch which plants seem to have butterflies on them in each season.
- Host plants are often good nectar plants, too.

Summer

Spring



Fall



Perennials

- Lantana
- Greg's Mistflower
- Yarrow
- Coreopsis
- Blackfoot daisy
- Scabiosa
- Coneflowers
- Mealy cup sage
- Lavender
- Hollyhock
- Liatris



Juniper hairstreak on Gregg's mistflower



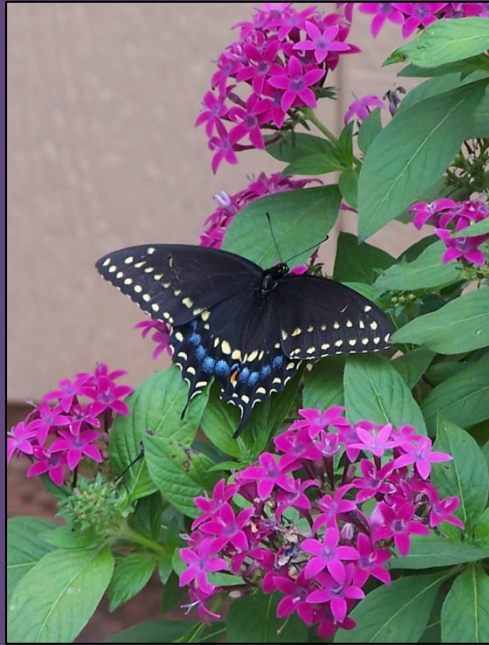
Red admiral on coreopsis



Annuals

- Zinnias
- Pentas
- Milkweed
- Golden Dewdrop
- Cosmos
- Sunflower
- Petunias

Swallowtail on pentas



Dogface butterflies
on zinnias



Monarch on golden
dewdrop

Trees

- Desert willow
- Mountain Laurel
- Yaupon holly
- Vitex
- Texas sage



Shrubs

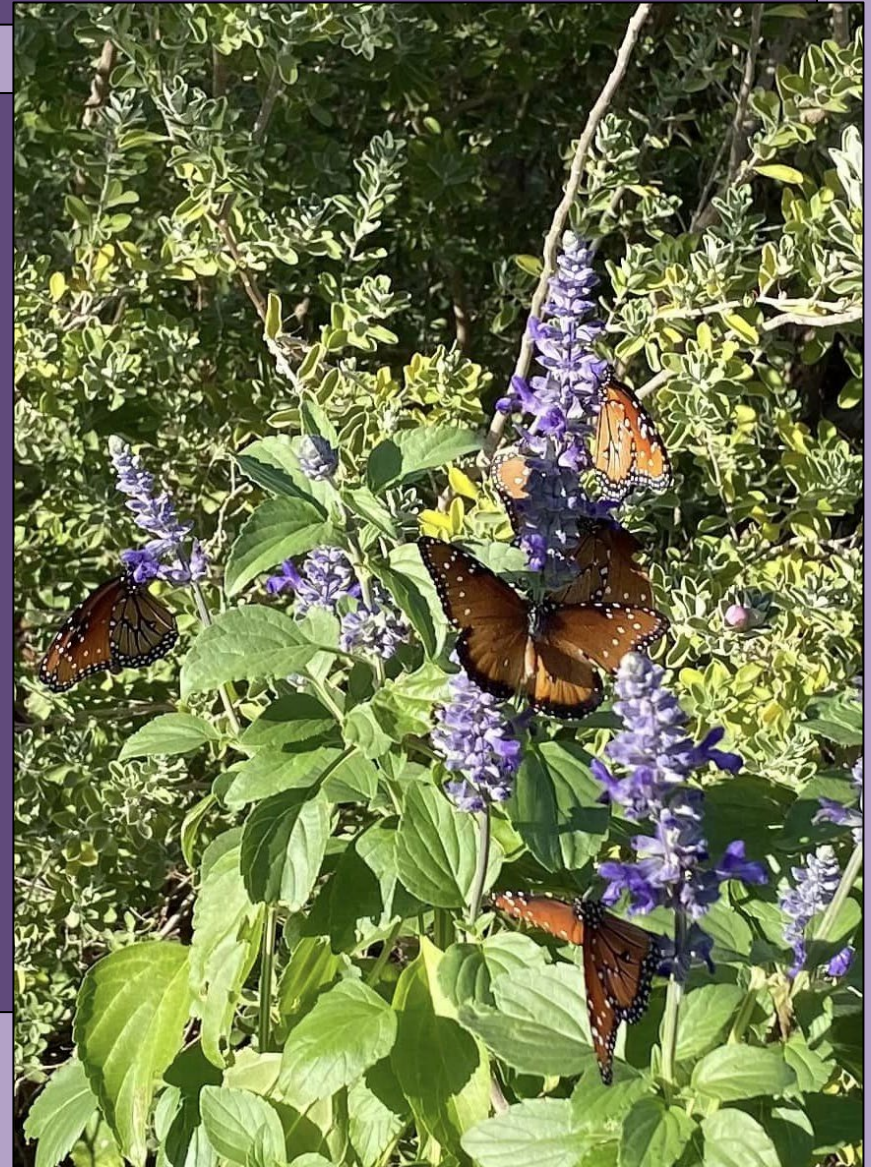
- Butterfly bush
- Turk's cap
- Glossy abelia
- Salvia gregii
- Agarita



A Friendly Environment

It's important to make
our gardens both
inviting and a safe
place for butterflies.

Monarch and queens enjoying one of
their favorites, mystic spires salvia



Nix the Pesticides

- They kill all insects, even the organics
- Systemics are particularly bad for caterpillars.
- If you absolutely have to use them, do so sparingly and with care.
- I put up with a lot of aphids and some chewed up leaves. Its worth it.



The Issue with Ants

- Fire ants are a real menace to caterpillars.
- I've been told that any thing that will kill ants will kill caterpillars, but caterpillars shouldn't eat ant bait.
- So you weigh the risk.
Which is more dangerous
to your butterfly caterpillars?



Other Things to Include:

- Ornamental grasses provide cover for small butterflies.
- Leaves on the ground in the fall will provide cover for those that winter over.
- Try to avoid watering with an overhead sprinkler, it dilutes nectar.



- A “puddling” area, with a dish of damp sand or area of moist dirt, provides butterflies with important minerals.
- Flat rocks or logs for sunning are appreciated.
- Place puddling area and sunning rocks near open areas.



Gray hairstreak on four nerve daisy

Butterfly Feeder

- Not all butterflies drink nectar. Some like tree sap, rotten fruit, manure, even carrion.
- You can use things like over-ripe bananas and cantaloupe, to attract these butterflies.



Red admiral and question marks
enjoy the feeder



Butterfly Brew

- Mash up bananas or peaches and mix with molasses or brown sugar.
- Add stale beer or yeast.
- Put it in a plastic bottle and seal, but not too tight.
- Put a chunk of bark in a shallow dish and drizzle on some brew. Or you can paint it on fence posts and trees.



Mourning cloaks like
tree sap and fruit

Helpful Websites

www.butterfliesandmoths.org – my go to website.
Lots of great information.

www.butterfliesathome.com – special page on
Texas butterflies. Includes suggested books and
links to butterfly and nature centers in the state.

www.dallasbutterflies.com – list of host plants.

Also list of native nurseries
in the Metroplex.



Horace's dusky wing on rock

Conservation Sites

www.xerces.org – insect conservation; especially pollinators. Good info. on monarchs.

www.monarchwatch.org – the site for monarch conservation. Information on milkweeds and milkweed sources. Also how to set up your garden as a Monarch Waystation.



Monarch on Greg's mistflower

National Butterfly Center

The National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas has a butterfly garden certification program.

If your garden meets the criteria,
for a fee, you can have your garden
officially certified.

They also have a butterfly
festival every year.



www.nationalbutterflycenter.org

Hope you enjoyed the program!

