



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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GREATER KANSAS CITY, KANSAS-MISSOURI

by Alan Branhagen

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

Numbers in "BLOOM SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.); codes correspond to the season (S = Spring, X = Summer, F = Fall), with < meaning earlier in the month or season, = the middle of the month/season, and > late in the month/season. Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species. Many kinds of butterflies are attracted to these flowers, except as specifically noted.

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	SEASON	BLOOM ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N	Spring beauty <i>Claytonia virginica</i>	½'	pink	3-4	Zebra Swallowtail	perennial; grows in woodlands
N	Rose verbena <i>Verbena canadensis</i>	½-1'	pink-lavender	4-11		perennial; best early nectar source
A	Chives <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	2'	lavender	5		perennial; deadhead (seeds profusely)
A	Dame's Rocket <i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	3-4'	purple to white	5	Swallowtails	biennial; don't plant near natural areas
A	Mock orange <i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	6-8'	white	5		shrub; 'Natchez' & 'Polar Star' good
A	Marigold (single flowers) <i>Tagetes</i>	1-3'	yellow-red	5-9		annual
A	Scarlet sage <i>Salvia coccinea</i>	2-3'	red	5-10	Cloudless Sulphur	annual
N	American basswood <i>Tilia americana</i>	50'	cream	6		shade tree
A	Buenos Aires vervain <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	3-4'	blue	6-frost		tender; grow as self-sowing annual
A	Mexican sunflower <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	4-8'	orange	=X->X		annual
A	Zinnia (single flowers) <i>Zinnia violacea</i>	3-4'	various	=X->X		annual; can have mildew problems
N	Pale purple coneflower <i>Echinacea pallida</i>	3'	pink	6		perennial
N	Purple milkweed <i>Asclepias purpurescens</i>	3-4'	purple	6		perennial
N	Mountain mint <i>Pycnanthemum</i>	1½-2'	white	6-7		perennial
N	Fragrant hyssop <i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	3-4'	blue	6-9		perennial
A	Pentas <i>Pentas lanceolata</i>	2-3'	various	6-9		annual
A	Periwinkle <i>Catharanthus roseus</i>	1-1½'	various	6-9		annual
A	Blood flower <i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	3-4'	yellow-red	6-10		annual
A	Lantana <i>Lantana camara</i>	1-2'	various	6-10		annual

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TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS *(continued)*

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A	Globe amaranth <i>Gomphrena globosa</i>	1½-2'	white-pink, purple	6-10		annual
A	Porterweed <i>Stachytarpheta urticifolia</i>	3-4'	various	6-10		annual
N	Butterfly weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2-3'	orange	7		perennial
N	Marsh blazingstar <i>Liatris spicata</i>	3'	lavender-	7		perennial; 'Kobold' a good cultivar
N	New Jersey tea <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	2-3'	white	7		shrub
N	Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	3-4'	pink	7-8		perennial
N	Goldsturm rudbeckia <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	3'	yellow	7-8	Pearl Crescent	perennial
N	Prairie blazingstar <i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	3-4'	lavender- purple	7-8		perennial
N	Purple coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	3'	pink	7-8		perennial
A	Sulphur cosmos <i>Cosmos sulphureus</i>	3-4'	yellow- orange	7-9		annual
A	Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia</i>	3-5'	yellow to purple	7-10		tender shrub
N	Garden phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	3-4'	various	8		old-fashioned varieties best
N	Joe-pye-weed <i>Eupatorium purpureum, maculatum</i>	4-6'	pink	8		perennial
N	Marsh milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	3-4'	pink or white	8		perennial; grow in wet to average soil
A	Glossy abelia <i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	2-4'	white	8-9	Swallowtails	tender shrub
N	Mistflower <i>Eupatorium coelestinum</i>	1½-2'	blue	8-9		spreading perennial
N	New England aster <i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	3-6'	pink to purple	8-9		perennial
N	Rough, savanna blazingstar <i>Liatris aspera, scariosa</i>	3'	lavender- purple	8-9		perennial
N	Aromatic aster <i>Aster oblongifolius</i>	1½'	lavender	9		perennial
N	Stiff goldenrod <i>Solidago rigida</i>	3-5'	yellow	9		can flop if in good soil
A	Cosmos <i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	3-5'	white, red	9-10		annual
N	Showy goldenrod <i>Solidago speciosa</i>	3'	yellow	9-10		most gardenworthy goldenrod

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NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

FLOWER **COMMENTS**
 None to list.

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N Black cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	30-50'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple	medium to large tree
A Blood flower <i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	3-4'	Monarch	annual
N Butterfly weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2-3'	Monarch	perennial; needs good
A Dusty Miller <i>Senecio</i>	1-2'	American Lady	tender; grow as annual
N Dutchman's pipevine <i>Aristolochia tomentosa</i>	20'	Pipevine Swallowtail	woody vine; rampant grower
A Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	3'	Black Swallowtail	perennial
A Gas plant <i>Dictamnus albus</i>	2-3'	Giant Swallowtail	long-lived perennial
N Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	50'	American Snout, Question Mark, Hackberry & Tawny Emperors	shade tree
N Hop tree <i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	1-1¼'	Giant Swallowtail	small tree, fragrant flowers
N Kentucky wisteria <i>Wisteria macrostachys</i>	20'	Silver-spotted Skipper	woody vine; rampant grower
N Marsh milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	3-4'	Monarch	perennial; tolerant of wet soil
N Meadow parsnip <i>Thaspium barbinode</i>	1½-2'	Black Swallowtail	perennial; under used in gardens but gardenworthy
A Parsley <i>Anethum graveolens</i>	1'	Black Swallowtail	annual
N Partridge pea <i>Cassia fasciculata</i>	2-4'	Cloudless Sulphur	annual; needs good drainage
N/A Passion vines <i>Passiflora</i>	8-20'	Gulf & Variegated Fritillaries	perennial vine
N Pawpaw <i>Asimina triloba</i>	15-20'	Zebra Swallowtail	small tree
N Purple milkweed <i>Asclepias purpurescens</i>	3-4'	Monarch	perennial
N Pussytoes <i>Antennaria</i>	3-9"	American Lady	perennial
N Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	15-30'	Henry's Elfin	small tree
A Rue <i>Ruta graveolens</i>	1½-2'	Giant Swallowtail	perennial herb
N Sweet bay <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	12-15'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	small tree with fragrant flowers
N Tulip tree <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	50'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	large tree
N/A Violets <i>Viola</i>	3-9"	Variegated & Great Spangled Fritillaries	perennial

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TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

(continued)

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY	CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N Wild senna <i>Cassia hebecarpa</i>	3-5'	Cloudless Sulphur		perennial; tolerates wet soil
N/A Willows <i>Salix</i>	8-50'	Viceroy		shrubs or trees

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.), with < meaning earlier in the month, m the middle of the month, and > late in the month. Resident = lives in area year round (hibernated through winter). Colonist = colonizes area during growing season but does not normally overwinter in area; usually more common after mild winters.

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Pipevine Swallowtail <i>Battus philenor</i>	5-9	2-3 broods: 6-10	Dutchman's pipevine	resident butterfly
Zebra Swallowtail <i>Eurytides marcellus</i>	4-8	3 broods: 5-9	Pawpaw	resident
Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	4-10	3+ broods: 5-10	Carrot family	resident
Giant Swallowtail <i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	5-10	2 broods: 6-10	Citrus family	resident
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i>	4-9	3 broods: 5-10	Tulip tree, magnolia, black cherry, ash	resident
Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	3-9	4-9	Cabbage & related	resident
Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	4-9	5-9	Pea family	resident
Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	5-10	6-9	Alfalfa & related	resident
Cloudless Sulphur <i>Phoebis sennae</i>	7-11	8-11	Partridge pea, senna	colonist
Little Sulphur <i>Eurema lisa</i>	6-10	5-10	Partridge pea	colonist
Sleepy Orange <i>Eurema nicippe</i>	6-10	5-10	Partridge pea	colonist
Gray Hairstreak <i>Strymon melinus</i>	5-10		Beans	colonist (pesty)
Eastern Tailed-Blue <i>Everes comyntas</i>	4-10		Pea family flowers	resident
Spring Azure <i>Celastrina ladon</i>	4-10	4 broods	Dogwood & other flowers	resident
Variiegated Fritillary <i>Euptoieta claudia</i>	5-11		Violets, passionvine	colonist/resident?
Great Spangled Fritillary <i>Speyeria cybele</i>	5-9	9-4	Violets	resident
Silvery Checkerspot <i>Chlosyne nycteis</i>	5-9	2 broods	Sunflower family	resident
Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	4-11	over winter	Aster family	resident
Question Mark <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>	1-12		Hackberry	resident
Eastern Comma <i>Polygonia comma</i>	1-12			resident
American Lady <i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	4-11	5-11	Aster family	resident
Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	4-11	5-11	Thistles	colonist
Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	4-11	over winter	Nettles	resident (may over-winter as adult)
Common Buckeye <i>Junonia coenia</i>	5-11	6-11	Plantain, snapdragon	colonist
Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i>	5-10	6-10	Willows	resident
Red-spotted Purple <i>Limenitis arthemis</i>	5-10	over winter	Black cherry	resident
Hackberry Emperor <i>Asterocampa celtis</i>	6-10	over winter	Hackberry	resident

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COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Tawny Emperor <i>Asterocampa clyton</i>	6-10	2 broods: 7-10	Hackberry	resident
Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	4-11	5-10	Milkweeds	migrant
Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	5-9	3 broods: 5-10	Wisteria	resident

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

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NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Bronze Copper <i>Lycaena hyllus</i>	5-10		Docks	resident in fields and wetlands
Banded Hairstreak <i>Satyrium calanus</i>	5-7		Oaks, walnut, hickory	resident in oak woodlands
Henry's Elfin <i>Callophrys henrici</i>	4		Redbud	resident near woods
American Snout <i>Libytheana carinenta</i>	7-9		Hackberry	colonist, usually near floodplain woodlands
Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	8-9	8-10	passionvines	colonist; rare
Gray Comma <i>Polygonia progne</i>	1-12	3 broods; over winter	Missouri gooseberry	resident near woodlands
Mourning Cloak <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	1-12	2 broods	Many	resident near woodlands
Goatweed Leafwing <i>Anaea andria</i>	1-12		Goatweeds	resident near open woods
Little Wood-Satyr <i>Megisto cymela</i>	5-7	1 brood?	Grasses	resident near woodlands
Common Wood-Nymph <i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	6-9	1 brood	Grasses	resident near meadows

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: 6 (5b in outlying areas)

This area is in the American Horticultural Society Heat Zone 7 (long, hot summers). Winters are moderate with short, severe cold snaps; snow seldom stays more than for one week intervals. Average last freeze is in mid-April, average first freeze in late October, but extremes are the usual. Minimum temperature is 0°F on average but -27°F has been recorded. It is very windy here, being on the edge of the Great Plains.

Soils are generally heavy clay; amend with organic matter (peat, compost) to improve aeration. Topography consists of rolling prairie with deep valleys and wooded ridges, typical of the agricultural Midwest.

Butterflies emerge in April, peak in August, and are in good flight through October or until a severe freeze.

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