



# NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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## SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN

(Eaton, Calhoun, and Kalamazoo Counties)

by Richard C. Fleming

with assistance from Elizabeth Fleming, Becky Csia, and Leah Knapp

### TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

A number in front of a flower name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Numbers in "BLOOM SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A 1 Red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	½-1½'	pink-purple	3-10	Black and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded and Orange Sulphur, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Common Checkered-Skipper, European Skipper	easy to grow
A 3 Dame's rocket <i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	2-3½'	purple, pink, white	5-<6	Eastern Tiger and Spicebush Swallowtail, Cabbage White	
A 3 Zinnia <i>Zinnia</i>	1½-2½'	orange, yellow, red	6-<10	Swallowtails, Fritillaries	
N 1 Butterfly weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	1½-2'	orange	>6-<8	Eastern Tiger and Spicebush Swallowtail, Banded Hair-streak, American Copper, Great Spangled Fritillary, American Lady, Monarch	not easy to grow; requires sun and sandy soil
N 1 Wild bergamot <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	2-3'	blue-purple	>6-<9	Eastern Tiger and Spicebush Swallowtails, Great Spangled Fritillary, Silver-spotted Skipper	quite tolerant of soils; needs some sun
N 2 Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	2½-4½'	light red	<7-<9	Hairstreaks, Monarch; Swallowtails (occasionally)	likes more open areas
N 2 Swamp milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	2-4'	deep pink	<7-9	Hairstreaks, Great Spangled and Aphrodite Fritillary, Monarch	likes low wet areas
A 1 Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia alternifolia</i>	to 12'	lavender	7->9	Giant, Eastern Tiger, Spicebush Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Great Spangled Fritillary, Viceroy, Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper, Red-spotted Purple (occasionally)	grows quite well in this area, but needs sun

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**TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS**

(continued)

	<b>FLOWER</b>	<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>COLOR</b>	<b>BLOOM SEASON</b>	<b>ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
N 1	Purple coneflower <i>Echinacea pallida</i>	2-5'	red-purple	7-10	Black, Giant, Eastern Tiger, and Spicebush Swallowtails; Cabbage White; Great Spangled and Aphrodite Fritillaries; Monarch; Silver-spotted Skipper; Common Checkered-Skipper; Sulphurs (occasionally)	easy to grow; will grow in spotty shade and open areas
N 2	Sweet joe-pye-weed <i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	2-7'	purple-pink	7-9	Eastern Tiger and Spicebush Swallowtail, Great Spangled Fritillary, Monarch	easy to grow in this area, even in partial shade
N	Garden phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	3-4'	lavender-	8-9	Eastern Tiger, Giant, and Spicebush Swallowtail	easy to grow
N	Blazing star <i>Liatris ligulistylis</i>	1-2'	red-pink, pink-purple	8-9	Aphrodite Fritillary, Silver-spotted Skipper; Black Swallowtail (occasionally)	

**NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION**

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

	<b>FLOWER</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
N	Bee-balm <i>Monarda didyma</i>	A very nice plant, easy to grow in this area, but doesn't seem very attractive to butterflies. Note that related wild bergamot ( <i>Monarda fistulosa</i> ) is one of the best butterfly nectar plants to be found.
A/N	Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis</i>	Although sometimes suggested as good butterfly attracters, that doesn't seem to be the case here for these fine-looking flowers, also known as tickseed.
A	Impatiens <i>Impatiens</i>	The cultivated varieties make nice border flowers but not great butterfly attracters. only one butterfly (a Spicebush Swallowtail) seen feeding on it.

**TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS**

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

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
A	Alfalfa <i>Medicago sativa</i>	1-1½'	Clouded and Orange Sulphur	
N	Black cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	to 70'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Coral Hairstreak, Red-spotted Purple	easy to grow

**SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN**

**TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS**

(continued)

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
N	Butterfly weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	1½-2'	Monarch	see "Nectar Flowers"
N	Clovers <i>Trifolium</i>	1-2'	Clouded and Orange Sulphur	
N	Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	2½-4½'	Monarch	see "Nectar Flowers"
N/A	Nettles <i>Urtica</i>	1-4'	Question Mark, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral	
A	Parsley <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	1-2'	Black Swallowtail	easy to grow
N	Prickly ash <i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>	to 10'	Giant Swallowtail	
N	Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	to 50'	Spicebush Swallowtail	
N	Spicebush <i>Lindera benzoin</i>	to 10'	Spicebush Swallowtail	
N	Swamp milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	2-4'	Monarch	see "Nectar Flowers"
N	Turtlehead <i>Chelone glabra</i>	1-3'	Baltimore Checkerspot	prefers wet areas
N	Violets <i>Viola</i>	½'	Fritillaries	
N	Willow <i>Salix</i>	10-60'	Mourning Cloak, Viceroy	

**COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD**

A number in front of a butterfly name indicates a particularly likely species (1 = most expected to be seen). Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.), with < meaning earlier in the month, m in the middle of the month, and > late in the month.

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>FLIGHT PERIOD</b>	<b>CATERPILLAR SEASON</b>	<b>CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1	Giant Swallowtail <i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	>5-<9	6-9	prickly ash	common some years, scarce others
1	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i>	>5-<9	6-9	wild cherry and related	easy to attract
1	Spicebush Swallowtail <i>Papilio troilus</i>	>5-<9	6-9	sassafras and spicebush	easy to attract
3	Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	>5-<9	6-9	parsley, dill, carrot	more common in fields than yards

**SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN**

**COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD**

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
1 Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	<5-10	6-8	cabbage, mustard, and related	very common, easy to attract
2 Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	5=>10	>5->10	clovers, alfalfa	
3 Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	5=>10	>5->10	clovers, alfalfa	less common than Clouded Sulphur
2 Banded Hairstreak <i>Satyrium calanus</i>	<7-8		walnut, oaks, hickories	
2 Spring Azure <i>Celastrina ladon</i>	>4-8	5-9	viburnums, spiraeas, dogwoods	
1 Great Spangled Fritillary <i>Speyeria cybele</i>	<6-10	9-5	violets	easy to attract
1 Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	<5-<10	6-10	asters	maybe our most common butterfly
2 Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	4-10	5-9	nettles, wood nettles	very common some years, scarce others
2 Red-spotted Purple <i>Limenitis arthemis astyanax</i>	=5-<9	6-9	cherries, poplars, oaks	common in gardens but nectars rarely
2 Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i>	=5-<9	6-9	willows	common in gardens but nectars rarely
2 Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	>5-10	6-8	milkweeds	
1 Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	<5->9		black locust and related	attracted to many kinds of flowers

**LOCAL & UNUSUAL 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.

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Hickory Hairstreak <i>Satyrium caryaevorum</i>	>6-<8		hickories, possibly oaks	
Baltimore Checkerspot <i>Euphydryas phaeton</i>	>5-<8		turtlehead, plantain	small, local populations occur
Compton Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis vau-album</i>	7-6		willow, aspen, probably birch	common further north
Hoary Edge <i>Achalarus lyciades</i>	5-8		beggar's ticks	local; not uncommon some years

# GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

## USDA ZONE: 5

Average frost-free period is from the last week of May to the first week of October. Soils are various, so best to check locally. Winters are moderate to cold; summers mild, occasionally hot. Temperatures are moderated somewhat by the Great Lakes surrounding the state.

Other nectar flowers that might be included are various composites (asters, thistles, goldenrods, black-eyed Susan, and related flowers).

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*) nectaring on wild bergmot (*Monarda fistulosa*),  
By Gary Elred



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