



# NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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## TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

by Kathy Heidel

### 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
N/3 A Clovers (red, white), bird's foot trefoil, sweet clovers, vetch, alfalfa (legume family)	1-2'	red, pink, yellow, white, blue	spring- summer	Sulphurs including Orange, E. Tailed-Blue (red clover) Skippers including Tawny- edged and Delaware	
A 3 Garden phlox <i>Phlox</i>	30"	white, pink, lavender	mid- summer	Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Monarch, moths	
N Milkweeds <i>Asclepias</i> Butterfly <i>A. tuberosa</i> Common <i>A. syriaca</i> Swamp <i>A. incarnata</i>	2-3'	orange pink pink	summer	Great Spangled Fritillary, Monarch	
N 2 Prairie blazingstar <i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	24-42"	pink	7	Monarch	
N 1 Hyssop <i>Agastache</i>	4'	purple, cream	7-8	Black Swallowtail, Clouded Sulphur, American Lady, Viceroy, Common Wood- Nymph, Monarch	
N 2 Purple coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	2-3'	pink	7-8	Spring Azure, E. Comma, Red Admiral, Red-spotted Purple, White Admiral, Viceroy, Monarch, Tawny-edged, Skipper, N. Broken-Dash, Delaware Skipper	
N/A2 Yarrow <i>Achillea</i>	2'	pink, yellow, white	7-8	Bronze Copper, Hairstreaks, Fritillaries	often used for basking surface
N 1 Joe-pye-weed <i>Eupatorium</i>	4-5'	white, pink, cream, purple	7-9	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Cabbage White, Coppers, Banded Hairstreak, Spring Azure, Pearl Crescent, Viceroy, Common Wood- Nymph, Monarch	likes moist soil; pinch back to create bushiness; heavily used by butterflies

## TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

(continued)

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
N 3	Rough blazingstar <i>Liatris aspera</i>	24-42"	pink	7-9	Monarch	
A 1	Brazilian verbena <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	3'	purple	7-snow	Black, E. Tiger Swallowtail Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Milbert's Tortoise-shell, American Lady, Red Admiral, Red-spotted Purple, White Admiral, Viceroy, Monarch, moths	reseeding annual, start under glass and transplant; pinch back to increase branching; our most butterfly-attracting plant
A 2	Sedum <i>Sedum</i>	1'	pink	late summer	Blues, Viceroy, Monarch	
N 1	Stiff goldenrod <i>Solidago rigida</i>	30-36"	yellow	late summer	Swallowtails, Sulphurs, Monarch	
N 1	New England aster <i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	4'	pink to purple	9-10	Black, E. Tiger Swallowtail Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Milbert's Tortoise-shell, American Lady, Red Admiral, Viceroy, Monarch	like moist or heavy soils; very showy; pinch back to keep shorter

*Other nectar flowers of note:* bull thistle, bur marigold, cosmos, daisy fleabane, dame's rocket, dandelion, evening primrose, lantana, mints like wild bergamot, mountain mint, mustards, pansies, sneezeweed, sunflowers, vervain, wild roses.

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

FLOWER	COMMENTS
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	We have hundreds of these flowers and rarely to they attract any butterflies.
Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia</i>	This is not at all the draw here that books lead you to believe; only late in season do some butterflies visit these blossoms.
Marigolds <i>Tagetes</i>	Very few butterflies nectar on these flowers though the color may draw them to the garden.
Pentas <i>Pentas</i>	Very little activity by any butterfly species at this flower.

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### TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

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

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
A Alfalfa <i>Medicago sativa</i>	1'	Orange Sulphur	
A/N Clovers, trefoils, vetches (legume or pea family)		Clouded Sulphur, Blues	
N Elm <i>Ulmus americana, rubra</i>	tree	Eastern Comma, Question Mark	
A Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	2-3'	Black Swallowtail	this was preferred over parsley, carrot or dill
A/N Grasses; crabgrass, blue-grass, timothy, foxtail	6-12"	skippers	
N Milkweeds <i>Asclepias</i>	18-36"	Monarch	
A/N Mustards, broccoli, cabbage (cabbage family)		Cabbage White	
N Willows <i>Salix</i>	shrub/ tree	Mourning Cloak	

### COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.), with < meaning earlie in the month, m the middle of the month, and > late in the month.

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	5-9	5-9	fennel, dill, parsley	caterpillars especially in 8-9
Eastern/Canadian Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus/canadensis</i>	5-7/8		black cherry, aspen	
Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	6-9	5-9	broccoli, cabbage, mustards	
Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	5-9	5-9	members of legume family, like clovers	
Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	>5-9	6-9	members of legume family	alfalfa fields nearby are needed
Banded Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium calanus</i>	>6-8	5		

TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

**COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD**

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Spring Azure <i>Celestrina ladon</i>	5-8	5-9	flowers of various shrubs and trees	
Great Spangled Fritillary <i>Speyeria cybele</i>	>6-8	5	violets	
Pearl Crescent/Northern Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos/selenis</i>	7		asters	
Milbert's Tortoiseshell <i>Nymphalis milberti</i>				feeds at mud or rotting fruit
American Lady <i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>			pussy toes, pearly & sweet everlasting	
Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>				must have thistles that bloom
Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				
Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i>	6-8	4-5,7,9	willows	
Eyed Brown <i>Satyroides eurydice</i>	7			
Northern Pearly-Eye <i>Enodia anthedon</i>	early-mid summer			
Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	6-10	6-8	milkweeds	
Least Skipper <i>Ancyloxypha numitor</i>	6-8		grasses	
Tawny-edged Skipper <i>Polites themistocles</i>	7-8		grasses	
Long Dash <i>Polites mystic</i>	early-mid summer		grasses	
Northern Broken-Dash <i>Wallengrenia egeremet</i>	7-8		grasses	
Delaware Skipper <i>Anatrytone logan</i>	7		grasses	

## TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

### LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Eastern Tailed Blue <i>Everes comyntas</i>	5-8		members of legume (pea) family	needs short grass near prairie clovers
Mourning Cloak <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	4-10		willows	needs trees & shrubs nearby
Question Mark <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>				feeds on mud & scat
Red-spotted Purple <i>Limenitis arthemis astyanax</i>	6,8			needs woods nearby
Little Wood-Satyr <i>Megisto cymela</i>	early-mid summer			needs woods nearby
Common Wood-Nymph <i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	7-8		grasses	needs old fields nearby
Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	6-8		locusts	

### GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

#### USDA ZONE: 3/4

Soils vary from heavy clay to clay loam to sandy glacial till. Soils generally are neutral to slightly alkaline. Very rarely do we find even slightly acid soil. Butterfly season begins with sap run in maple trees in March and April. Monarchs appear in early June and depart in August and September. Most of our butterfly watching is done by late August. Winters are long and cold. Topography is rolling glacial lateral and terminal moraine covered with fragmented forest, prairie fragments, marshes, swamps, and lakes, and may cultivated fields of corn, soybeans, alfalfa, orchards, and open space parklands. Climate is continental: hot, dry to humid summers; cold, long winters; pleasant springs and falls. Rainfall is around 25 inches per year. Snowfall rarely exceeds 50 inches per year.

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