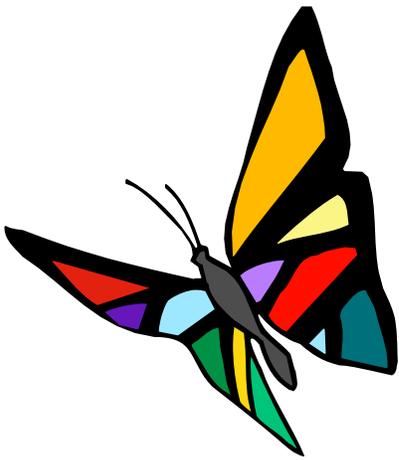




BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are among the most fascinating and beautiful creatures that we may observe and if approached carefully, are easier to observe than birds. Living nearly everywhere, there are about 700 species of butterflies found in North America north of Mexico. The life cycle of the butterfly is one of the fundamental miracles of nature and may easily be observed in your own backyard.

BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS



Butterflies and moths differ from all other insects in having scales over all or most of their wings and often on their bodies as well. As do all insects, butterflies have 6 jointed legs, 3 body segments, and 2 antennae. Butterflies and moths are separated by their wing venation, body structure and habits. Butterflies fly during the day while most moths are nocturnal. While resting, butterflies tend to hold their wings vertically over the back and moths usually fold them horizontally over the back or extend them to the sides. Virtually all butterflies have knoblike clubs at the tips of the antennae while moths do not. When the butterfly caterpillar enters the pupa or chrysalis stage, it is usually naked, attached to a twig or stem, while the moth pupa is protected by a silken cocoon.

LIFE CYCLE

After mating, the female butterfly lays eggs either singly, or in rows or clusters, depending on the species. Egg shapes and textures vary greatly between species and some will hatch before winter while others do not hatch until the following spring. The caterpillar, or larva, has simple eyes, chewing jaws, 3 pairs of jointed legs near the front and 5 pairs of grasping legs near the rear. The caterpillar spends its life eating and growing. Because its skin does not stretch, the caterpillar grows by molting or shedding its skin. The final molt produces the chrysalis or pupa. This is a resting stage and it does not feed. When the adult is fully formed, the skin of the chrysalis splits open, allowing the butterfly to crawl out. As soon as the adult can fly, courtship will begin. The adult's lifespan ranges from a week to 6 or 8 months with most averaging about 2 weeks.

OBSERVING BUTTERFLIES

Although traditionally butterfly enthusiasts collected specimens to keep as displays, today most conservation minded naturalists prefer to observe butterflies in their natural habitats. Two essential tools for butterfly watching are a field guide for making species identification and a notebook for recording sightings and observations of behavior. Binoculars may also be helpful. Butterflies usually fly during the time of year when maximum daily temperatures are 60 degrees or higher.

*Making the world beautiful
one flower at a time.*



The best places to find butterflies are open, sunny areas with lots of flowers. By taking notes on the butterflies you see, you will soon learn their habits and preferences. This may help in identification and in planting your garden and flower beds to attract butterflies.

ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are easily attracted by planting a garden with a variety of plants and flowers that will nourish both the caterpillars as well as the adults. Butterflies will stay in your garden only if they find plenty of their favorite nectar producing flowers for feeding and caterpillar friendly plants for laying eggs. Some butterflies like to drink from the edges of mud puddles or wet sandy areas so they will appreciate some mud in the corner of your garden or even a tray filled with wet sand. Place some large stones or flat rocks in sunny locations where butterflies can absorb heat to warm their bodies. Rotting fruit such as bananas or peaches attracts many butterflies. Place them in a butterfly feeder or in shallow dishes near flowers. Specially made butterfly homes are becoming more popular and species such as the Red Admiral, Mourning Cloak, Compton Tortoiseshell and the Question Mark will overwinter in such houses even in northern gardens.

PLANTS TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES

<i>Lilac</i>	<i>Thistles</i>
<i>Spiraea</i>	<i>Violets</i>
<i>Butterfly Bush</i>	<i>Yarrow</i>
<i>Armeria</i>	<i>Sweet Alyssum</i>
<i>Asters</i>	<i>Ageratum</i>
<i>Bee Balm</i>	<i>Cosmos</i>
<i>Butterfly Weed</i>	<i>Dianthus</i>
<i>Coreopsis</i>	<i>Heliotrope</i>
<i>Purple Coneflower</i>	<i>Lobelia</i>
<i>Hollyhock</i>	<i>Lantana</i>
<i>Lavender</i>	<i>Marigold</i>
<i>Lupines</i>	<i>Nasturtium</i>
<i>Garden Phlox</i>	<i>Nicotiana</i>
<i>Black-eyed Susan</i>	<i>Verbena</i>
<i>Salvia</i>	<i>Zinnia</i>
<i>Ornamental Grasses</i>	<i>Shasta Daisy</i>

Fruit trees, viburnums, lilacs and many ornamental grasses are fed upon by caterpillars. Usually the damage to plants is only slight and temporary, so use caution with pesticides if you see “worms” on some of your plants. It’s best to positively identify any insect before spraying as it just may be the larva of the very butterflies you are trying to attract. Caterpillars will also feed on parsley, dill, rue and rock cress.



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