Butterflies and their host plants are intricately tied to one another. Generally, there are two types of plants that you must have in your garden for butterflies. One is a nectar plant (or plants); adult butterflies feed on these nectar plants. The second plant you must have is a larval host plant; the immature stage (larva) feeds on this plant.

When you plan a butterfly garden, you should plan for both types of plants. This information sheet lists both types of plants and some of the butterflies we can expect to see in Mississippi.

Many kinds of butterflies will usually visit the nectar plants, but you must be careful when choosing a larval host plant if you want to attract a particular species of butterfly. Also, remember the larval plant will be eaten, so expect that to happen and plan accordingly.

**Selected Nectar Plants**

**For Mississippi Butterfly Gardens**

- **Angel’s Trumpet** – Datura meteloides
- **Bee Balm** – Monarda didyma
- **Black-Eyed-Susan** – Rudbeckia spp.
- **Butterfly Bush** – Buddleia davidii
- **Cardinal Flower** – Lobelia cardinalis
- **Cleome** – Cleome pungens
- **Common Mallow** – Malva neglecta
- **Coneflower** – Echinacea spp.
- **Coreopsis** – Coreopsis spp.
- **Cosmos** – Cosmos spp.
- **Dame’s Rocket** – Hesperis matronalis
- **Dogwood** – Cornus florida
- **Frikart Aster** – Aster x frikartii
- **Garden Phlox** – Phlox paniculata
- **Gayfeathers** – Liatris spp.
- **Glossy Abelia** – Abelia grandiflora
- **Goldenrod** – Solidago spp.

- **Gomphrena** – Gomphrena globosa
- **Hardy Ageratum** – Conoclinium coelestinum
- **Hibiscus** – Hibiscus spp.
- **Hollyhock** – Alcea rosea
- **Hollyhock Mallow** – Malva alcea
- **Joe-Pye Weed** – Eupatorium purpureum
- **Lantana** – Lantana spp.
- **Milkweed** – Asclepias spp.
- **Musk Mallow** – Malva moschata
- **Ox-Eye Daisy** – Leucanthemum vulgare
- **Passion Flower** – Passiflora incarnata
- **Pentas** – Pentas lanceolata
- **Queen-Anne’s-Lace** – Daucus carota
- **Sages** – Salvia spp.
- **Shasta Daisies** – Leucanthemum superbum
- **Showy Sedum** – Sedum spectabile
- **Spicebush** – Lindera benzoin
- **Swamp Sunflower** – Helianthus angustifolius
- **Sweet William** – Dianthus barbatus
- **Verbena** – Verbena spp.
- **Willow** – Salix spp.
- **Yarrows** – Achillea spp.
- **Zinnia** – Zinnia spp.

**Selected Larval Plants**

**For Mississippi Butterfly Gardens**

- **Anise Hyssop** – Agastache foeniculum
- **Black Cherry** – Prunus serotina
- **Common Mallow** – Malva neglecta
- **Dill Weed** – Anethum graveolens
- **Dogwood** – Cornus florida
- **Dutchman’s pipe** – Aristolochia durior
- **Fennel** – Foeniculum vulgare
- **Frikart Aster** – Aster x frikartii
- **Hollyhock** – Alcea rosea
- **Hollyhock Mallow** – Malva alcea
- **Milkweed** – Asclepias spp.
- **Mullein** – Verbascum spp.
- **New England Asters** – Aster novae-angliae

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**Mississippi State University Extension Service**
Host plants ensure food sources for butterfly species. When the plants are available for both larva and adults, they will come. Feeders, water, and mineral sources can provide additional incentives for butterflies to visit and remain in the garden area.

Common Butterflies Found in Mississippi

American Painted Lady – Vanessa virginiensis
Buckeye – Junonia coenia
Comma – Polygonia comma
Gulf Fritillary – Agraulis vanillae
Hackberry – Asterocampa celtis
Mourning Cloak – Nymphalis antiopa
Painted Lady – Vanessa cardui
Pearly Crescent – Phyciodes tharos
Question Mark – Polygonia interrogationis
Red Admiral – Vanessa atalanta
Red-spotted Purple – Basilarchia arthemis

Viceroy – Basilarchia archippus
Brown Elfin – Insulzia augustinus
Eastern Pygmy Blue – Brehmidae isophthalma
Gray Hairstreak – Strymon melinus
Silvery Blue – Glaucopsyche lygdamus
Spring Azure – Celastria ladon
Monarch – Danaus plexippus
Queen – Danaus gilippus
Large Wood Nymph – Ceryonis pegala
Common Checkered Skipper – Pyrgus communis
Silver-spotted Skipper – Epargyreus clarus
Tawney-edged skipper – Polites themistocles
Eastern Black Swallowtail – Papilio polyxenes
Giant Swallowtail – Papilio cresphontes
Pipevine Swallowtail – Battus philenor
Spicebush Swallowtail – Papilio troilus
Tiger Swallowtail – Papilio glaucus
Zebra Swallowtail – Eurytides marcellus
Cabbage White – Pieris rapae
Checkered White – Pontia protodice
Cloudless Giant Sulfur – Phoebis sennae
Common Sulphur – Colias philodice
Dogface butterfly – Zerene cesonia
Falcate Orangetip – Anthocharis midea
Orange Sulphur – Colias eurytheme
Sleepy Orange – Eurema nicippe

For more information on butterflies, visit these web sites:

Butterflies and Moths of North America Web Site:
http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/

North American Butterfly Association
http://www.naba.org/

North American Butterfly Association Newsletter
http://www.naba.org/pubs/bg.html