



Habitat Gardening in Central New York

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Monarchs & other butterflies

IMPORTANT: Butterflies are insects, and insecticides will kill them. Don't use pesticides if you want butterflies! Don't buy plants treated with systemic pesticides such as neonicotinoids (Ex. Safari). They permeate the plant, don't wash off, and are permanently toxic.

Milkweeds for monarch caterpillars

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*): medium to wet soil; sun to part shade; 2-4 ft; pink flowers; doesn't spread

Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*): wet to dry; sun to part sun; 2-4 ft; pink, wonderfully fragrant; will spread

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*): medium to dry well-drained soil; sun to part sun; 1-3 ft; orange

Some host plants for CNY butterflies

A *host plant* is the food for the butterfly's **caterpillar** stage. No host plant, no caterpillars; no caterpillars, no butterflies!

Pipevine swallowtail - pipevine

Black swallowtail – zizia, dill, parsley, carrot, fennel

Giant swallowtail – prickly ash, common rue

Spicebush swallowtail – spicebush, sassafras, tulip tree

Tiger swallowtail – wild black cherry, tulip tree

Clouded sulphur – clovers, alfalfa, black locusts

Cloudless sulphur – sennas, clovers, legumes

Brown elfin – blueberries, bearberries

Banded hairstreak – oaks, hickories, butternut

Gray hairstreak - mallows

Eastern tailed blue – clovers, legumes, baptisia

Spring azure – dogwood, NJ tea, wild cherry

Hackberry, Tawny emperor – hackberry tree

Mourning cloak – willow, elm, poplar, birch, hackberry

Comma – hops, nettles, elms

Question mark – nettles, hops, hackberry, elm

American Lady – pussytoes, pearly everlasting, ironweed

Fritillaries (Meadow, Great spangled) – violets

Baltimore checkerspot – white turtlehead, penstemon

Crescents (Northern, Pearl) – asters

White admiral – birches, aspen, poplars

Red admiral – nettles

Silver-spotted skipper – black locust, woody legumes

Dreamy Duskywing – willows, poplar, aspen, birch

Nessus sphinx moth – grapes

Hummingbird moth – honeysuckle, hawthorn, *Prunus*

Polyphemus moth – oaks willow, maple, birch

Cecropia moth – sugar maple, cherries/plums, dogwoods

Luna moth – white birch, hickories, walnuts, sumacs

Native nectar plants for all butterflies

Include plants (esp. species, *not cultivars*) that bloom in spring **and** summer **and** fall for the adult butterflies.

Plant **large** patches. And plant **lots** of patches.

NOTE: Buddleia (aka butterfly bush) is NOT recommended! It's not native and can be invasive.

Some SPRING nectar sources:

Wild plums / wild cherries (*Prunus spp.*)

Blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*)

Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

Violets (*Viola spp.*)

Some SUMMER nectar sources:

Milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*)

Coneflowers (*Echinacea spp.*)

Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*), bergamot (*M. fistulosa*)

New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)

Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)

Coreopsis/Tickseed (*Coreopsis spp.*)

Sunflowers (*Helianthus spp.*)

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Some FALL nectar sources:

Joe-pye weed, boneset, snakeroot (*Eupatorium spp.*)

Gayfeather, blazing star (*Liatris spp.*)

Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) They do NOT cause allergies!

New England, New York asters (*Aster spp.*)

Black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia spp.*)

New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)

Other foods for some butterflies

* Sap from wounded trees

* Rotting fruit e.g. from shrubs with excess berries that rot

* Even urine, dung, bird droppings for some butterflies

Overwintering sites

Depending on the species, they may overwinter as eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises, or as adult butterflies, so leave some logs, leaf litter, debris etc. around your yard so they have a place to stay. **Try not to be a landscaping neat-nik!** (And they do NOT need--or use--"butterfly houses"!)

Resources

MonarchWatch's **Milkweed Market local ecotype plants!**

<http://monarchwatch.org/milkweed/market/>

Xerces Society *Gardening for Butterflies*

Rea, Ba et.al. *Milkweed, Monarchs and More*

Stokes, Donald and Lillian: *Butterfly Book* (Caution: They list some non-native invasive plants--otherwise excellent)

Monarch Watch: www.monarchwatch.org

Journey North: www.journeynorth.org

Monarch Joint Venture: www.monarchjointventure.org

Wild Ones: wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/

Our Habitat Garden:

www.ourhabitatgarden.org/creatures/monarchs.html

www.ourhabitatgarden.org/creatures/butterflies.html