



Habitat Gardening in Central New York

www.hgcny.org
www.facebook.com/hgcny
www.ourhabitatgarden.org
info@hgcny.org
(315) 487-5742

Monarchs & other butterflies

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

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, butterflies 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. **Don't be a landscaping neat-nik!** (And they do NOT need -- nor use -- "butterfly houses"!)

Resources

Xerces Society *Gardening for Butterflies* – Excellent!
Rea, Ba et.al. *Milkweed, Monarchs and More*

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

Plants recommended by The Xerces Society's Gardening for Butterflies

Scientific Name	Common Name	Nectar	Host for Butterflies / Skippers / Moths
TREES, SHRUBS			
Quercus (spp)	Oaks	N	LOTS!!!
Prunus virginiana	Chokecherry	Y	LOTS!!! Cecropia; Swallowtail etc
Salix discolor	Pussy willow	Limited	LOTS!!!
Sambucus nigra	Black elderberry	Limited	Spring azure
Gaylussacia baccata	Black huckleberry	Y	Brown elfin; Sphinx moths
Cephalanthus occidentalis	Buttonbush	Y	Sphinx moths
Ceanothus americanus	New Jersey tea	Y	Duskywing; Spring azure; Summer azure
Hibiscus moscheutos	Hibiscus	N	Skippers; hairstreaks; moths
Lindera benzoin	Spicebush	N	Moths; Eastern tiger and Spicebush swallowtails
HERBACEOUS			
Monarda didyma	Scarlet beebalm	Y	Sphinx
Monarda fistulosa	Wild bergamot	Y	Hermit sphinx; Moths
Eupatoriadelphus maculatus	Spotted Joe-pye	Y	Moths
Eupatoriadelphus purpureus	Sweet Joe-pye	Y	Moths
Eupatoriadelphus fistulosus	Hollow joe-pye	Y	Moths
Cirsium muticum	Swamp thistle	Y	Painted Lady; Swamp metalmark
Cirsium discolor	Pasture thistle	Y	Painted Lady
Pycnanthemum virginianum	Va. Mtn. Mint	Y	?
Lupinus perennis	Wild lupine	N	Many, inc. Karner Blue
Verbesina alternifolia	Wingstem	Y	Gold moth; Silvery checkerspot
Solidago rugosa	Wrinkleleaf goldenrod	Y	?
Rudbeckia hirta	Brown-eyed susan	Limited	Checkerspot
Conoclinium coelestinum	Blue flossflower	Y	?
Verbena hastata	Blue vervain	Y	Common buckeye
Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly weed	Y	Monarchs; Tiger moth; Tussock moth; Queen
Viola sororia	Common blue violet	Y	Fritillaries
Liatris spicata	Dense blazing star	Y	?
Oenothera biennis	Evening primrose	Y	Primrose moth; Sphinx moth
Penstemon digitalis	Foxglove beardtongue	Y	?
Zizia aurea	Golden alexander	Y	Black swallowtail
Lespedeza hirta	Hairy bush clover	N	Moths; Sulphur; ETC. ETC. ETC.!!
Lespedeza capitata	Round-head bush clover	N	Many hairstreaks ETC.
Symphitrichum novae-angliae	New England aster	Y	Pearl crescent
Anaphalis margaritacea	Pearly everlasting	Y	Painted Lady; American Lady
Boehmeria cylindrica	Small spike false nettle	N	Comma, Question mark; Red admiral
VINES			
Aristolochia serpentaria	Va. Snakeroot		Pipevine swallowtail
GRASSES (many can also serve as pupation and overwintering sites)			
Andropogon gerardii	Big bluestem	N	Skippers
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian grass	N	Skippers
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little bluestem	N	Skippers
Sporobolus heterolepis	Prairie dropseed	N	Skippers
Tridens flavens	Purpletop	N	Skippers; Wood nymph; Little glassywing
Panicum virgatum	Switchgrass	N	Skippers
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted hairgrass	N	Skippers
Carex stricta	Tussock sedge	N	Skippers