

SPI Butterfly Garden Native Nectar Plants and Host Plants

By: Javier Gonzalez

Below is a list of native nectar and host plants (plants that the caterpillars eat) that benefit a great variety of native butterfly species. It is important to provide a diverse combination of both nectar and host plants in a butterfly garden in order to benefit a greater diversity of butterfly species. The diversity in butterfly species parallels the diversity of plant life in a habitat. All can be manicured for a garden setting.

Nectar Plants- It is important to include nectar plants with different flowering periods so that your garden can attract butterflies during the different seasons of the year. Nectar plants come in a great variety, from small herbaceous plants that attract tiny butterflies, to large trees that benefit both small and large butterfly species. The use of Perennial plants will insure flowers year after year.

Host Plant- Specific plant(s) that is utilized as food by caterpillars. Each butterfly species has its own specific host plant(s) species and that butterfly species' caterpillars only eat from their specific host(s). Butterflies are dependent of their host plant(s) for reproduction. Some nectar plants can also serve as host plants. Host plants can be trees, shrubs, or herbaceous plants.

Ex. Monarchs and Queen butterflies are dependent on Milkweed plants as hosts.

Most butterflies and nectar plants prefer full sun conditions. Also, butterflies prefer to feed in areas shielded by the wind. A fence, a wall, or a shrub can serve as windbreaks. **Keep in mind that there are plenty of shrubs that are also good nectar or host plants. Also keep in mind that some plants are more salt tolerant than others. If you are close to the coast, an area out of the prevailing wind will be ideal to help the plants against the salty air.**

The guidelines in the **Monarch Joint Venture, "Gardening for Monarchs"** can be applied to any butterfly garden.

I would also suggest a visit to a local nature center where you can see and get an idea of what the native plants look like in terms of size, their particular growing habits, and what they attract. This will give you a better sense in the planning of your garden. Check to see if your local nature center offers a butterfly/plant walk that you can join. Also keep in mind that these plants can differ in soil and water requirements.

Key:

(*)-Good Monarch Plant(s) (H)-Host (gc)-Groundcover
(h)-Herbaceous (S)-Shrub (V)-Vine
(T) - Tree (C)- Coastal

Perennial Nectar Plants:

<u>Common name</u>	<u>Scientific name</u>	<u>Sun pref.</u>	<u>Nectar</u>	<u>Bloom</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>Asteraceae- Sunflower Family*</u>					
Blue Boneset Mistflower*(S)	<i>Eupatorium azureum</i>	Part/Full	Great	Spring	
Betony Mistflower*(C)(h)	<i>Eupatorium betonicifolium</i>	Part/Full	Excellent	Spring-Fall	(H) Rounded Metalmark
Gregg's Mistflower*(C)(h)	<i>Eupatorium greggii</i>	Part/Full	Excellent	Spring-Fall	(H) Bordered Patch
Crucita* (S)	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>	Pt/Full Sun	BEST	Fall	(H) Rounded Metalmark
Frostweed*(tall(h))(C)	<i>Verbesina microptera</i>	Part/Full	Good	Summer/Fall	Attractive white flowers
White Mistflower (h)	<i>Fleischmannia incarnata</i>	Part/Full	Good	Fall	Attracts small butterflies
Mexican Trixis* (S)(C)	<i>Trixis inulta</i>	Part/Full	Good	All seasons	
Skeleton Leaf Golden Eye* (S)(C)	<i>Viguiera stenoloba</i>	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	(H) Bordered Patch
Hairy Wedelia (h)(C)	<i>Wedelia acapulcensis</i>	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	(H) Bordered Patch
Seaside Goldenrod*(C)(h 6')	<i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	Full Sun	Excellent	Summer-Fall	Important coastal nectar
Bush Sunflower(h 30")	<i>Simsia calva</i>	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Summer-Fall	(H)Bordered Patch
<u>Boraginaceae-Borage Family</u>					
Wild Olive, Anacahuita*(T)	<i>Cordia boissieri</i>	Full Sun	Great	All seasons	small tree 26' tall
Anacua*(T 49')	<i>Ehretia anacua</i>	Full Sun	Great	Spring-Fall	shield from wind
Scorpion's Tail (h)	<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>	Full Sun	Excellent	All seasons	Attracts small butterflies

Perennial Nectar Plants:

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Other
<u>Euphorbiaceae- Spurge Family</u>					
Low Croton(S)	Croton humilis	Part/Full	Great	Spring-Fall	(H) Tropical Leafwing
Torrey's Croton(S 6')	Croton incanus	Part/Full	Good	Spring-Fall	(H) Tropical Leafwing
<u>Fabaceae- Legume Family</u>					
Tenaza*(T 16')	Havardia pallens	Part/Full	Excellent	Spring-Fall	Blooms after a good rain
Texas Kidneywood*(S 13')	Eysenhardtia texana	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	(H) Southern Dogface
<u>Flacourtiaceae- Flacourtia family</u>					
Brush Holly (S <6')	Xylosma flexuosa	Part/Full Sun	Excellent	Spring-Summer-Fall	Berries attract birds
<u>Lamiaceae- Mint Family</u>					
Shrubby Blue Sage*(S)	Salvia bellotiflora	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	
Scarlet Sage*(h)	Salvia coccinea	Full Sun	Good	All year	also attracts hummingbirds
<u>Malvaceae- Mallow Family- (H) to a variety of Hairstreaks and Skippers</u>					
Indian Mallow(h)	Abutilon fruticosum	Full Sun	Good	All year	
Heartleaf Hibiscus(h)	Hibiscus martianus	Full Sun	Excellent	Spring	Showy flowers/short lived
Turk's Cap*(S)	Malvaviscus drummondii	All conditions	Excellent	Spring-Fall	also attracts hummingbirds
<u>Plumbaginaceae- Plumbago Family</u>					
White Plumbago*(h)	Plumbago scandens	Part/Full Sun	Excellent	Spring-Fall	(H) Cassius and Marine Blues

Perennial Nectar Plants:

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Other
<u>Rhamnaceae- Buckthorn Family</u>					
Coyotillo(S 6')	Karwinskia humboldtiana	Part/Full Sun	Good	Spring-Summer	Toxic Berries (H) Two-barred Flasher
<u>Rubiaceae- Madder Family</u>					
Mexican Buttonbush*(S 16')	Cephalanthus occidentalis	Full Sun	Excellent	Summer	Prefers wet areas
Crucillo(S 6')	Randia rhagocarpa	Part/Full	Good	Spring-Summer	(H) Band-celled Sister
<u>Rutaceae- Citrus Family</u>					
Sierra Madre Torchwood (C)(S 10')	Amyris madrensis	Full Sun	Fair	Spring-Fall	(H) Giant Swallowtail
Texas Torchwood(S 3-6')	Amyris texana	Full Sun	Fair	Spring-Fall	(H) Giant Swallowtail
<u>Sapotaceae – Sapodilla Family</u>					
Coma(C)(S or T 30')	Sideroxylon celastrinum	Part/Full	Good	Spring-Fall	Produces berries eaten by birds
<u>Scrophulariaceae – Figwort Family</u>					
Cenizo* (C)(S 6 1/2')	Leucophyllum frutescens	Part/Full	Fair	Spring-Fall	Flowers after rains (H) Theona Checkerspot

Perennial Nectar Plants:

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Other
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Sterculiaceae – Chocolate Family

Wholly Pyramid Bush (S 7')	Melochia tomentosa	Part/Full	Good	Spring-Fall	Beautiful addition to a garden
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Verbenaceae – Verbena Family

Berlandier's Fiddlewood*(C) (S 7')	Citharexylum berlandieri	Part/Full	Excellent	Spring-Fall	Produces berries that attract birds
White Brush (C) (S 10')	Aloysia gratissima	Full Sun	Excellent	Spring-Fall	Attracts small butterflies
Texas Lantana*(S >6')	Lantana horrida	Full Sun	Great	Spring-Fall	(H) Painted Lady
Velvet Lantana (S >6')	Lantana velutina	Full Sun	Great	Spring-Fall	
Texas Frog Fruit (h)(gc)	Phyla nodiflora	Full Sun	Great	Spring-Fall	(H) Phaon Crescent, White Peacock

Annual Nectar Plants:

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Other
<u>Asters- Sunflower Family*</u>					
Texas Thistle* (C)(h 5')	Cirsium texanum	Full Sun	Excellent	Spring-Summer	spiny leaves (H)Painted Lady
Basket Flower* (h 5')	Plectocephalus americanus	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Summer	(H) Painted Lady
Southern Indian Blanket (C)(h)	Gaillardia pulchella	Full Sun	Fair	Spring-Summer	very showy wildflower
Texas Doubtful Palafoxia*(C)(h)	Palafoxia texana	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	common along the coast
Marsh Fleabane (C)(S 5')	Pluchea odorata	Full Sun	Excellen	Sum-Fall	grows in wet areas (H)Pearl Crescent
Cowpen Daisy* (C)(h 36")	Verbesina encelioides	Full Sun	Great	Spring, Fall	(H) Bordered Patch
<u>Lamiaceae- Mint Family</u>					
Horsemint (h 32")	Monarda citriodora	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Summer-Fall	
American Germander (h 39")	Teucrium canadense	Full Sun	Good	Winter-Spring-Summer	

Monarch Host Plants**:

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Host to
Asclepiadaceae- Milkweed Family*					
Hierba de Zizotes (C)(h)	<i>Asclepias oenotheroides</i>	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	(H)Monarch, Queen
Slim Milkweed (h)	<i>Asclepias linearis</i>	Full Sun			
Climbing Milkweed (V)	<i>Funastrum cynanchoides</i>	All conditions	Good	Summer, Fall	(H)Monarch, Queen, Soldier
Pearl Milkweed (V)	<i>Matelea reticulate</i>	Shade	poor	Sring-Fall	(H)Monarch, Queen

Perennial Host Plants: Not noted in Nectar Plants Section

Common name	Scientific name	Sun pref.	Nectar	Bloom	Host to
Acanthaceae- Acanthus Family					
Carlowrightia (h)	<i>Carlowrightia parviflora</i>	Part/Full Sun	Poor	Spring-Summer	Elada Checkerspot, Crimson Patch
Runyon's Wild Petunia(h)(C)	<i>Ruellia runyonii</i>	Sun-Shade	Fair	Spring-Summer	Texan Crescent, White Peacock, others
Tube Tongue(gc)(C)	<i>Justicia pilosella</i>	Part/Full Sun	Fair	Sp,Sm,Fl	Elada Checkerspot, Vesta Crescent, TX Crescent
Shaggytuft (h)(C)	<i>Stenandrium dulce</i>	Part Shade	Poor	Sring-Sm-Fl	Definite Patch
Snake Herb (gc)	<i>Dyschoriste crenulata</i>	Full Sun		Spring, Summer	Cyna Blue

Aizoaceae- Carpet Weed Family

Horse Purslane (h)	<i>Trianthema portulacastrum</i>	Full Sun		Spring-Fall	Western Pygmy-Blue
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Perennial Host Plants: Not noted in Nectar Plants Section

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<u>Asteraceae- Sunflower Family</u>					
Tiny Tim (h)	Thymophylla tenuiloba	Full Sun	Fair	Spring, Fall	Dainty Sulphur
<u>Capparidaceae- Caper Family</u>					
Clammy Weed (h)	Polanisia dodecandra	Full Sun	Good	Spring-Fall	Checkered White, Great Southern White
<u>Chenopodiaceae- Goosefoot Family</u>					
Spiny Fruited Saltbush(C)(S 40")	Atriplex acanthocarpa	Full Sun		Spring-Fall	Saltbush Sootywing, (Alkaline soils)
<u>Crassulaceae- Stonecrop Family</u>					
Stonecrop(C)(gc)	Sedum texanum	Full Sun		Winter	Xami Hairstreak
<u>Fabaceae- Legume Family</u>					
Tepeguaje (C)(T 33')	Leucaena pulverulenta	Part/Full Sun	Fair	Spring-Summer	Mimosa Yellow
Texas Ebony (C)(T 50')	Chloroleucon ebano	Part/Full Sun	Fair	Spring-Summer-Fall	Large Orange Sulphur, others
Honey Mesquite (C)(T 36')	Prosopis glandulosa	Part/Full Sun	Fair	Spring, Summer	Marine Blue, Long-tailed Skipper
Retama (C)(T 32')	Parkinsonia aculeate	Part/Full Sun		Spring-Summer	Clench's Greenstreak
Rattlepod (C)(h)	Crotolaria incana	Full Sun		Spring-Fall	Cassius Blue
Bearded Delea (h)	Delea pogonathera	Part/Full Sun	Good	Winter-Summer	Reakirt's Blue, Southern Dogface
Scarlet Pea (C)(h)	Indigofera miniata	Full Sun			Reakirt's & Cassius Blues, Funereal & False Duskywing
Hoary Milkpea (C)(V)	Galactia canescens			Spring-Fall	Marine & Cassius Blue, White-striped Longtail
Tornillo (C)(S 16")	Prosopis reptans	Full Sun		Spring-Summer-Fall	Blue Metalmark

Perennial Host Plants: Not noted in Nectar Plants Section

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Malpighiaceae- Malpigha Family					
Barbados Cherry (S 6')	Malpighia glabra	All conditions	Fair	Spring-Fall	White-patched Skipper, Brown-banded Skipper
Malvaceae- Mallow Family					
Berlandier's Abutilon	Abutilon berlandieri				Laviana White-Skipper, Texas Powdered-Skipper
Indian Mallow	Abutilon fruticosum				White Scrub-Hairstreak, Texas Powdered, Common Streaky-Skipper
Rio Grande Abutilon	Abutilon hypoleucum	Full Sun		Spring	Laviana White-Skipper
Amantillo	Abutilon trisulcatum	Shade		Spring-Fall	Laviana White-Skipper, Turk's-cap White-Skipper
Wright's Indian Mallow	Abutilon wrightii	Full Sun	Good		White Scrub-Hairstreak, Texas Powdered Skipper
Abutilon (7) spp.	Abutilon				Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak, Erichson's White-Skipper
Turk's Cap	Malvaviscus arboreus				Glassy-winged Skipper, Turk's-cap White-Skipper
Yard Mallow	Malvastrum coromandelianum	Full Sun		All year	Tropical Checkered-Skipper
Passifloraceae- Passion Flower Family					
Corona de Cristo (V)	Passiflora foetida	Full Sun	Fair		Gulf Fritillary
Corky Stemmed Passion Flower (V)	Passiflora suberosa	Pt. Shade			Gulf Fritillary, Zebra & Julia Heliconian, Mexican Silverspot
Rutaceae- Citrus Family					
Colima (S 29')	Zanthoxylum fagara	Full Sun	Fair	Spring	Sickle-winged Skipper, Ornythion Swallowtail

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Sapindaceae- Soapberry Family

Common Balloon Vine (V)	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>	Full Sun	Fair	All year	Silver-banded Hairstreak
Littlefruit Slipplejack (V)	<i>Serjania brachycarpa</i>	Part/Full Sun	Good	Summer, Fall	Glazed Pellicia

Scrophulariaceae- Figwort Family

(annual) Prairie Agalinis (C)(h)	<i>Agalinis heterophylla</i>	Full Sun		Spring-Summer	Tropical Buckeye, Common Buckeye
Water Hyssop (h)	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	Full Sun		Spring-Fall	White Peacock
Snapdragon Vine (V)	<i>Maurandya antirrhiniflora</i>	Full Sun		Spring-Summer	Common Buckeye

Ulmaceae- Elm Family

Sugar Hackberry (T 52')	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	Full Sun		Spring	Emperors, Question Mark, American Snout
Granjeno, Spiny Hackberry (S 20')	<i>Celtis pallida</i>	Full Sun		Spring	American Snout, Red-bordered Metalmark

Violaceae- Violet Family

Nodding Green Violet (h)	<i>Hybanthus verticillatus</i>	Full Sun		All Seasons	Variegated Fritillary
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