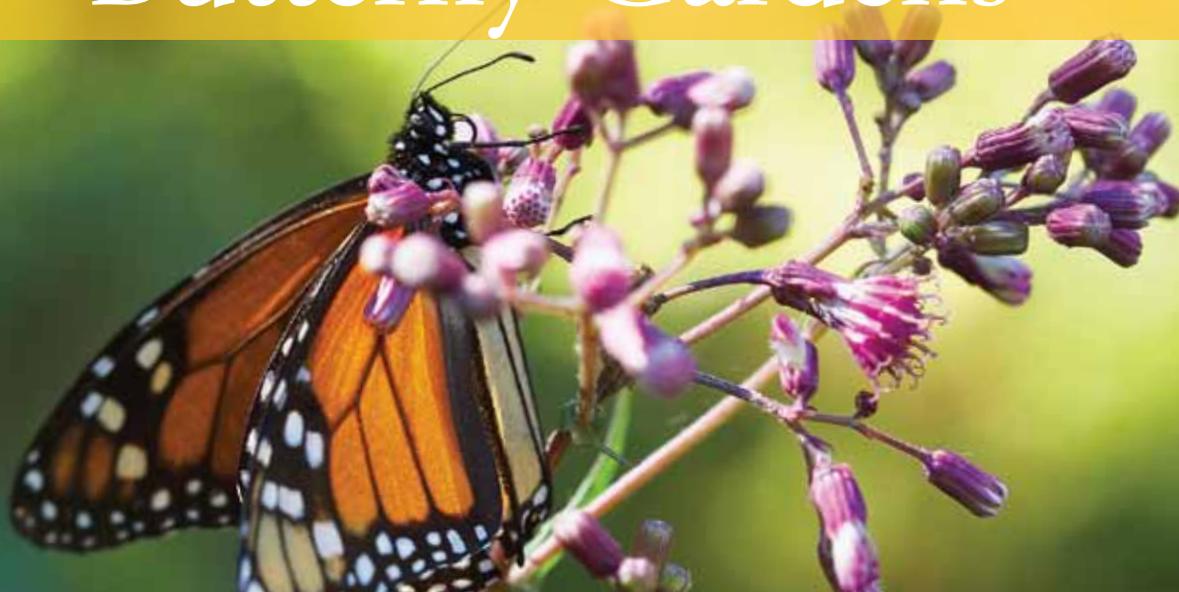


Butterfly Gardens

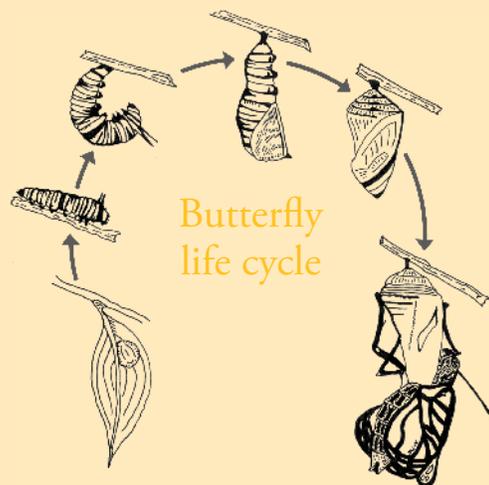


Making your garden butterfly-friendly

Gardens with many different native plants provide a safe home for butterflies to lay eggs and develop. Follow these tips to make your garden butterfly-friendly.

- Choose a sunny, sheltered location. Cold-blooded butterflies need warm temperatures to fly and feed. Place a flat rock in a sunny area as a basking spot for butterflies to warm themselves on.
- Include larval (caterpillar) host plants such as those listed on the back. Do not worry about caterpillars killing your plants. They are generally quite specific in their food choices, and their host plants have adapted to tolerate their feeding.
- Select plants with bright, fragrant flowers that are tubular or flat-topped. These flower types are easier for adult butterflies to feed from with their straw-like tongue called a proboscis. A list of nectar plants is included on the back.
- Create mud puddles in the garden. Butterflies use these as a source of water and nutrients. A small area of exposed soil in the garden is the perfect spot.
- Avoid chemical pesticides and fertilizers in your garden. Butterflies and caterpillars are very sensitive to these products. Even the smallest amounts can be deadly.

The transformation from caterpillar to butterfly is a fascinating process. Butterflies have a four-stage life cycle and often need specific host plants at specific life stages. Caterpillars typically depend on the leaves and shoots of a single host plant for food. Once they become adults, they fly off in search of nectar from different plants.

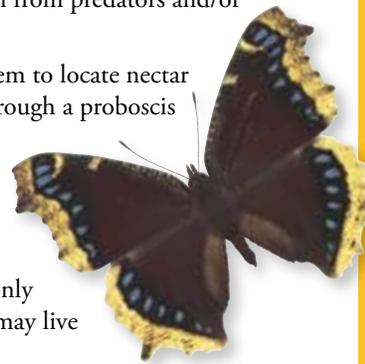


Caterpillar fun facts

- Caterpillars outgrow their skin several times before they are full grown. Each molting marks a new growth stage called an instar.
- Most butterfly caterpillars do not spin a cocoon. In their final instar, their skin hardens into a protective chrysalis around the pupa.
- Many caterpillars use mimicry or camouflage to protect themselves from predators. The Tiger Swallowtail caterpillar has false 'eyes' on its head to frighten predators. The White Admiral caterpillar is mottled grey and white, resembling bird droppings.
- Bright colouring can also be a defense. The black, white and orange striping of the Monarch caterpillar warns would-be predators of its bad taste.

All about butterflies

- Butterfly wings are covered with tiny scales, like roof shingles, and range in colour and patterns. These patterns may help with protection from predators and/or location of a mate.
- Butterflies have taste sensors in their feet that help them to locate nectar sources and larval host plants. They feed on nectar through a proboscis that coils up when not in use.
- Despite their fragile appearance, some butterflies are able to travel great distances. Monarchs migrate as far as Mexico.
- The length of time a butterfly lives varies. Some live only a few weeks, while others, like the Mourning Cloak, may live for months because they overwinter as adults.
- Though closely related, moths and butterflies differ in several ways.
 - Butterflies are active in the daytime; moths are nocturnal.
 - Most moths rest with their wings out flat; butterflies hold their wings upright.
 - Butterflies have clubs on the end of their antennae; moths do not.



Mourning Cloak

Additional resources

- Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in your Garden by Xerces Society/ Smithsonian Institute, 1998
- Canadian Wildlife Federation – Wild about Gardening www.wildaboutgardening.org
- The Butterflies of Canada by University of Toronto Press, 1998
(available online: www.cbif.gc.ca/spp_pages/butterflies/index_e.php)
- Toronto Entomologist Association www.ontarioinsects.org
- 100 Easy-to-Grow Native Plants for Canadian Gardens by Lorraine Johnson, 1999

A Selection of Native Plants for your Butterfly Garden

- Aster species 🌿 🦋
- Bee Balm 🌿 🦋
- Big Bluestem 🌿 🦋
- Birch species 🌿 🦋
- Black-eyed Susan 🌿 🦋
- Blue Grama Grass 🌿 🦋
- Blue Vervain 🌿 🦋
- Blazing Star 🌿 🦋
- Butterfly Weed 🌿 🦋
- Common Milkweed 🌿 🦋
- Dogwood species 🌿 🦋
- Goldenrod species 🌿 🦋
- Grey-headed Coneflower 🌿 🦋
- New England Aster 🌿 🦋
- New Jersey Tea 🌿 🦋
- Pale Purple Coneflower 🌿 🦋
- Pearly Everlasting 🌿 🦋
- Poplar species 🌿 🦋
- Showy Tick-trefoil 🌿 🦋
- Spicebush 🌿 🦋
- Spotted Joe-pye Weed 🌿 🦋
- Swamp Milkweed 🌿 🦋
- Turtlehead 🌿 🦋
- Wild Bergamot 🌿 🦋
- Willow species 🌿 🦋

🌿 – larval host

🦋 – nectar source

A number of popular non-native plants, both annual and perennial, also provide egg-laying and feeding opportunities for butterflies. Carrot, dill, fennel and parsley are especially useful host plants. Butterfly Bush is an excellent nectar plant.

For more information, please contact Toronto and Region Conservation
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