'Learning Outside' Information Sheet: How to Grow a Butterfly Garden

There are about 78 species of butterflies in New Brunswick! With a little planning, you can create a habitat for them and enjoy watching and learning about them.

1. **Choose the right spot**
   Butterflies are attracted to sunny wildflower meadows. The site you choose for your garden needs to provide the butterflies with these four features:

   - Sunshine – An open, sunny site will attract butterflies. A few large stones that capture the sun's heat and provide basking spots will encourage the butterflies to stay around.
   - Shelter from the wind – Butterflies rarely fly during strong winds and can't feed well in windy areas. Placing your garden where a hedge, shrubs, or a fence will provide shelter is a good idea.
   - Water and minerals – Butterflies often drink from muddy puddles. They get minerals as well when they drink from natural water sources. A damp patch in your garden, or a bird bath or other source of water is a good idea. But be aware that standing, stagnant water creates perfect breeding conditions for mosquitoes, so change the water frequently.
   - A pesticide-free environment – Butterflies, as well as pest insects, are affected by chemical pesticides.

2. **Choose the right plants**
   To attract butterflies, you need to have plants that provide both nectar for the adult butterflies and food for butterfly larvae (caterpillars).

   - Nectar sources – These are flowering plants. You want to have flowering plants with nectar available throughout the season, so you need to have flowers with a range of blooming times. Hybrids often have very little nectar, so choose other types. The garden can include annuals, perennials, shrubs, climbing plants, and wildflowers. A diverse garden with a wide variety of plants will attract the most butterflies. See Nectar Plant List below.

   - Food for caterpillars (host plants) – These are plants that butterflies lay their eggs on and that the caterpillars eat. You may already have some caterpillar food plants in your yard or neighbourhood. Some common Canadian trees (birch, poplars, willows) provide food (leaves) for caterpillars. So do some of the vegetables you may be growing (hopefully you don't mind sharing). Each type of butterfly has its own preferred host plants. Monarch butterflies require milkweed plants (they lay their eggs and the

caterpillars develop successfully *only* on milkweed plants). Black Swallowtail butterflies choose fennel, dill, parsley and other members of the carrot family. Milkweeds and members of the carrot family are also extremely good nectar sources for all kinds of insects. See Caterpillar Plant List below.

- Diversity – Including wildflowers, such as Queen Anne's lace, goldenrods, and black-eyed Susans among your garden plants, will entice the greatest diversity of butterflies and other insects. If you have grass, you could transform it into a wildflower lawn that includes creeping buttercups, thymes, and clovers (you may already have these in your lawn).

Nectar plant list

Annuals that produce lots of nectar:
Common heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*)
Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)
Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*)
Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Butterfly Weed (a milkweed species; *Asclepias tuberosa*)
Phlox (*Phlox* spp.)

Jewelweed (Touch-Me-Not, *Impatiens capensis*) is a good native species to plant
Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) is also a good native species

Perennials that are very popular with butterflies:
Joe Pye weed, spotted Joe Pye weed
Milkweed – several kinds
Goldenrods
Asters

To ensure you have nectar throughout the season:
Violets are among the earliest nectar plants to flower, followed by arabis, forget-me-nots, chives, sweet rocket, and dianthus. Then come the summer yarrows, daisies, mallows, milkweeds, coneflowers, and rudbeckias. Finally, in late summer and fall, Joe Pye weed, goldenrods, and asters bloom.

(This fact sheet includes information from http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca, http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/info_verte/papillons/papillons.htm, http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher)

PLANTS FOR BUTTERFLIES

(from the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Ottawa Field Naturalists Club:
https://ofnc.ca/programs/fletcher-wildlife-garden)

Nectar sources (* best; A = annual; P = perennial; Sh = shrub)

- *Achillea* spp. - yarrow (P)
- *Agastache* spp. - large-leaved hyssop (P)
- *Ageratum* - floss flower (A)
- *Allium schoenoprasum* - chives (P)
- *Anaphalis margaritacea* - Pearly Everlasting (P)
- **Anethum graveolens* - dill (A)
- **Arabis* (P)
- **Asclepias incarnata* - swamp milkweed (P)
- **Asclepias tuberosa* - butterfly weed (P)
- **Aster* spp. (P)
- *Aubreta* - rock cress (P)
- **Buddleia* - butterfly bush (Sh)
- *Centaurea montana* - perennial cornflower (P)
- *Centranthus ruber* - red valerian (P)
- *Chrysanthemum* spp. - daisies (P)
- *Coreopsis* (P)
- *Cosmos* (A)
- **Daucus carota* - Queen Anne's Lace (P)
- *Dianthus* spp. - pinks, Sweet William (P)
- *Dipsacus sylvestris* - teasel (P)
- **Echinacea* - coneflower (P)
- *Echinops* - globe thistle (P)
- **Eupatorium* spp. - Boneset, Joe Pye weed (P)
- **Euphorbia variegata* - Snow-on-the-mountain (A)
- **Foeniculum vulgare* - fennel (A)
- *Heliopsis* (P)
- *Heliotropium arborescens* - heliotrope, cherry pie (A)
- **Iberis umbellata* - candytuft (A)
- **Lantana* (A)
- *Liatris* spp. - gayfeather, blazing star (P)
- *Ligustrum amurense* - Amur privet (Sh)
- *Lupinus* spp. - lupins (P)
- *Malva* spp. - mallows (P)
- *Monarda* spp. - bee balm, bergamot (P)
- *Myosotis* spp. - forget-me-nots (P)
- *Nepeta mussinii* - catmint (P)
- **Petroselinum crispum* - parsley (P)
- *Phlox paniculata*, *P. maculata* (P)
- *Rudbeckia* spp. - Black-eyed Susan (P)
- *Salvia farinacea* (A)

- *Scabiosa caucasica* - pincushion flower (P)
- *Sedum spectabile* (P)
- *Silene armeria* - Sweet William catchfly (A)
- *Solidago* spp. - goldenrods (P)
- *Syringa* spp. - lilacs (Sh)
- *Tagetes patula* - French marigold (A)
- *Tithonia* - Mexican sunflower (A)
- *Verbena bonariensis* (A)
- *Veronica* spp. (P)
- *Viola* spp. - Johnny-Jump-Ups, violets, (P)
- *Zinnia* (A)

Host plants for butterfly larvae (caterpillars)

- Admiral, Red - nettles
- Admiral, White - birches, willows, poplars, hawthorns
- Azure, Spring - dogwoods, viburnums, blueberries, meadowsweets
- Blue, Silvery - lupins, vetches
- Brown, Eyed - sedges
- Fritillary, Great Spangled - violets
- Hairstreak, Banded - oaks, walnuts, hickories
- Monarch - milkweeds
- Mourning Cloak - willows, meadowsweets, elm, poplar
- Painted Lady - thistles, asters, mallows
- Painted Lady, American - Pearly Everlasting, pussytoes
- Question Mark - nettles, elms, hops, hackberries
- Skipper, European - timothy
- Skipper, Peck's - grasses
- Skipper, Least - grasses
- Sulphur, Common - clovers, alfalfa
- Sulphur, Orange - alfalfa, clovers
- Swallowtail, Black - wild carrot family, rue
- Swallowtail, Tiger - birches, willows, ashes, prunus species
- Tortoiseshell, Compton's - birches, willows
- Viceroy - willows, poplars, apples, prunus sp.
- White, Cabbage - mustards, brassicas, nasturtiums
- Wood Nymph, Large - grasses