


BUTTERFLY GARDEN


Flying Friends of Flowers

Butterflies fly great distances between flowers, moving pollen with them and sustaining genetic diversity, even though they are often not as efficient at pollinating as bees. Butterflies prefer tubular flowers that are low in nectar quantity and sugar content but often contain amino acids.

Did you know?

 There are about 28,000 species of butterflies in the world, and about 725 species in the United States, with 160 in Georgia.

 The fastest butterfly, a skipper species from south central Georgia, reaches speeds of 40 miles per hour.

 Butterflies smell with their antennae and taste with their tongues (proboscis) AND their feet.

 Most butterflies recognize their own species on the basis of color and odor.

What can you do to attract butterflies in your garden?



Good butterfly gardens contain both nectar plants for adult butterflies and host plants for caterpillars. Lists of host plants for Georgia butterflies can be found at www.pollinator.org.



Native plants tend to have short blooming periods, and a good variety of species are needed to have flowers in bloom most of the season.



A list of nectar plants specific to this region can be found by downloading the BeeSmart Pollinator Gardener App. Download the app:



Common Buckeye
Junonia coenia

Buckeyes arrive in Georgia each spring from Texas. The adults can be common in gardens from May through September. The larvae feed on plants in the plantain and snapdragon families, and the blackish caterpillars can often be found on the long-leaved plantain growing in lawns and gardens.



Black Swallowtail
Papilio polyxenes

The Black Swallowtail is a black butterfly with yellow markings on its forewings. Males have yellow on the hindwings as well, while the hindwings of females are distinctly bluish. Adult Black Swallowtails feed on nectar of various flowers, such as milkweed and thistles. The distinctive larvae can be found on parsley, fennel and many other plants in the carrot family.



Red Admiral
Vanessa atalanta

The Red Admiral is a widespread migrant, one of the earliest arrivals each spring from the South and Southwest. They overwinter as adults in the South. Host plants for larvae include stinging nettle, false nettle and pellitory. The caterpillars are easy to find since they use silk to pull a leaf together to make a nest for protection from predators and parasites.

