



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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UPSTATE NEW YORK

by Robert Dirig

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

A number in front of a flower name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Numbers in "BLOOM SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A	Common lilac <i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	20'±	lilac	5-6	Swallowtails, Question Mark, Vanessids, spring migrants	old well-estabshd. hedges excellent for spring species "weedy"
A	Yellow hawkweed <i>Hieracium caespitosum</i> (=pratense)	1-2'	yellow	5-6	many spring butterflies	
A	Dame's rocket <i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	3'	lavender or white	>5-6	same as lilac; also moths like clearwings	naturalizes well along shaded fringes of woods; self-seeds
N	Sparkling dewberry <i>Rubus flagellaris</i>	8"	white	6	many spring butterflies; skippers	likes sandy soil; very hot exposures
N 1	Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	2-3'	pink, white	6-7	many, including Hairstreaks, Fritillaries, Monarch	roadsides, old fields; spreads in large patches
N	Indian hemp <i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	3'	ivory	6-7	Hairstreaks, Fritillaries, Satyrs	roadsides, stream edges, lakeshores; spreading in large masses
A 2	Forget-me-not <i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	8"	sky blue, orange center	6-9	very many	likes seepy springs, ditches, undisturbed pond edge
A	Oxeye daisy <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	2'	white rays, yellow disk	6-9	very many	wonderful in garden; spreading in full masses
A 3	Red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	2'	magenta	6-10	very many	large masses attract nectarers; also caterpillar food plant
A	Wild mint, wild basil <i>Clinopodium vulgare</i> (=Satureja vulgaris)	1'	magenta	6-10 especially 7	very many, including Sulphurs, Fritillaries, and rarities like Gray Comma	spreads in full masses; a "weedy" look
N	Lavender beebalm <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	3'	lavender	7-8	many	spreads in large masses; wonderful in meadow gardens

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TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

(continued)

	FLOWER	HEIGHT	COLOR	BLOOM SEASON	ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES	COMMENTS
A	Spotted knapweed <i>Centaurea maculosa</i>	2-3'	magenta	7-9	very many butterfly species; also hummingbird moths	roadsides, hot sandy soils; aggressive masses nicely
N	Grass-leaved goldenrod <i>Euthamia (=Solidago) graminifolia</i>	3'	yellow	8-9	very many	
N	New England aster <i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	3-5'	purple rays, orange disk	9-10	Cabbage Whites, Sulphurs, Pearl Crescent, Monarch, autumn migrants	wonderful in the garden; also a caterpillar food plant
N	Crooked-stemmed aster <i>Aster prenanthoides</i>	2'	lavender rays, yellow disk	8-10	very many, including Sulphurs, Monarch	lovely masses; caterpillar food plant

NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

FLOWER	COMMENTS
A Crown Vetch <i>Coronilla varia</i>	planted for road bank stabilization

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

A number in front of a plant name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

	NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N 3	Black cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>	tree	Tiger Swallowtail, Coral Hairstreak, Spring Azure, Red-spotted Purple	nice edge tree
A	Carrot/Queen Anne's lace <i>Daucus carota</i>	3'	Black Swallowtail	very easy in the garden (also uses dill, parsley, other members of parsley family)
N	Common hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	tree	American Snout, Hackberry and Tawny Emperors	likes limey wetlands
N	Common milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i> (and other milkweeds)	2-3'	Monarch	also an excellent nectar flower
N	Elms <i>Ulmus</i>	tree	Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Mourning Cloak	yard borders; American Elm likes moisture
N	Pearly everlasting <i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i> (and other everlastings)	2'	American Lady	spreads in large masses; wonderful in gardens
A 2	Red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	2'	Clouded and Orange Sulphurs, Northern Cloudywing	also an excellent nectar flower

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TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

(continued)

NAME	HEIGHT	BUTTERFLY CATERPILLARS	COMMENTS
N 1 (+A) Stinging nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> subspecies	5-6'	Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, occasionally Painted Lady	difficult to transplant; likes rich, wet soil; edge habitats in partial shade; spreads in large masses
N Turtlehead <i>Chelone glabra</i>	2-3'	Baltimore Checkerspot	likes marshes and wooded swamps with openings
N Wild lupine <i>Lupinus perennis</i>	2'	Frosted Elfin, Eastern Tailed-Blue, 'Karnar' Melissa Blue, Persius Dusky-wing	does not transplant well, but grows quickly from seed; prefers limy sand; also a good nectar flower
N Willows <i>Salix</i>	shrubs, trees	Mourning Cloak, Viceroy	like moist ditches; younger clumps more likely to attract ovipositing females

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.).

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	5-6,8-9	6-7,8	umbellifers: dill, fennel, carrot, parsley, parsnip	infrequent adult visitor; more commonly seen as caterpillar
Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i>	5-6	6-7	ash, black cherry, tuliptree	most conspicuous garden butterfly
Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	4-11	long season	members of mustard family	often the only butterfly seen in the garden all day
Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	5-9/10	summer	red clover, white clover	frequent nectarer; lays eggs on lawn clovers
Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	6,8-9	7,late summer	clovers, alfalfa, vetch	visitor to garden
Great Spangled Fritillary <i>Speyeria cybele</i>	7-8	9-6	violets	occasional visitor in gardens
Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	5,7,9	6-8	asters	mudpuddles communally

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COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

(continued)

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	summer	summer	thistles, hollyhocks	frequent in gardens if present that year (erratic among years)
Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	6-9	summer	milkweeds	more frequent in garden in autumn, when migrating
Silver-spotted Skipper <i>Epargyreus clarus</i>	6-8	7-9	black locust, wisteria	avid flower visitor in gardens
European Skipper <i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	6-7	spring	timothy and perhaps other grasses	swarms in June-July

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Numbers in "FLIGHT PERIOD" and "CATERPILLAR SEASON" correspond to the month (4 = April, 5 = May, etc.).

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS	COMMENTS
Question Mark <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>	5-6,summer	6,7,8	elms, nettles	migrants on lilacs in May
Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	5-10	summer	stinging, wood, and false nettles	migrants on lilacs in May; on garden flowers in summer
Little Wood-Satyr <i>Megisto cymela</i>	6-7	7-5	grasses	

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: 5 (6 on west and southeast fringes; 4 on north fringes)

The soils in the Catskills are mostly acidic; in the Finger Lakes, soils are more basic. In the Hudson-Mohawk River corridor, some areas have much sand. Soil pH determines the plants that grow there, and therefore the butterflies. For example, Brown Elfins feed as caterpillars on blueberries (*Vaccinium*) in acid-soil regions; 'Olive' Juniper Hairstreaks on red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) in limy areas. The butterfly season is mainly June-July-August. The early species and hibernators occur in March to May; migrants mainly in May-June and September-October.

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