

## Butterfly Magnets

Recently we've noticed a big interest in butterfly gardening and decided it was time to put together this information. Along with observations from Tucson botanist Greg Starr, two sources of information were particularly helpful – the booklet “Desert Butterfly Gardening,” published by the Arizona Native Plant Society and the Sonoran Arthropod Studies Institute and the book “Native Gardens for Dry Climates,” by Sally and Andy Wasowski.

In a butterfly garden you should provide both nectar sources and larval food plants. Adult butterflies feed on the nectar of certain flowers, while the caterpillars feed on specific plants known as “larval food plants.” Try to combine plants to provide a year-round source of nectar, if possible. Limit or eliminate the use of pesticides and other chemicals in the garden, as they can kill caterpillars and adult butterflies. You can expect butterflies to be most active during ideal conditions: Sunny, calm days, when the temperatures range from 65 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit. They seem to prefer early mornings and evenings during the hot summer months. On the following list we have included the “butterfly plants” that we grow, as well as a few others that you may be able to locate elsewhere. The notation “N” indicates a nectar source, while “L” identifies larval food plants. Some plants provide both!

Native trees listed in the songbird table can also be used for peripheral plantings and shade for butterflies.

### **Design Guidelines**

1. Provide a variety of plants that feed larval and adult butterflies. Food plants need to provide for two different stages of the butterfly's life: larval and adult. Therefore, it is important to have an adequate mix of plants that will support larvae and other plants that will be available for the adults.
2. Emphasize massing of plants. Massing should be relatively greater in butterfly gardens compared to bird gardens. This is due to the greater recognition factor of plant masses rather than a singular plant by adult butterflies. Use of accent plants (with unique shapes, such as agaves or yuccas) with the many masses can create effective contrast and interest for the garden visitor.
3. Provide sunny, wind-protected locations. Butterflies are cold-blooded and need sunlight to warm the muscles they use to fly, and protection from wind when feeding.
4. Provide a puddle. Butterflies require a shallow puddle or moist soil for water. A slow dripping emitter near a water-loving plant can fulfill this need.

<b>Genus species</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Asclepias subulata</i>	Milkweed	Shrub	Adult and larval food
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly Bush	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Buddleja marrubifolia</i>	Butterfly Bush	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Caesalpinea pulcherrima</i>	Red bird of paradise	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Calliandra eriophylla</i>	Baja Fairy Duster	Shrub	Larval food
<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Desert Willow	Tree	Adult food
<i>Cordia parvifolia</i>	Little leaf Cordia	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Brittlebush	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Hyptis emoryi</i>	Desert Lavender	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Trailing Lantana	Groundcover	Adult and larval food
<i>Leucophyllum</i> spp.	Texas Sages	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Oenothera caespitosa</i>	Evening Primrose	Perennial	Adult food
<i>Pasiflora foetida</i>	Passion flower	Vine	Larval food
<i>Penstemon</i> spp.	Penstemon	Perennial	Larval food
<i>Plumbago scandens</i> (Summer Snow™)	Plumbago	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Salvia clevelandii</i>	-	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Salvia greggii</i>	Autumn Sage	Shrub	Adult food
<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	Globe Mallow	Perennial	Adult and larval food
<i>Tagetes lemmonii</i>	Mt. Lemmon Marigold	Perennial	Adult food
<i>Verbena goodingii</i>	Desert Verbena	Perennial	Adult food
<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	Monk's Pepper	Tree	Adult food
<i>Zinnia acerosa</i>	Desert Zinnia	Perennial	Adult food

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