



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES AND HUMMINGBIRDS WITH COLOR

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The Pleasure of Butterfly Gardening — Simple Steps to Success:

- Lots of sunshine—Southern exposure is the best area for “basking” rocks, flat stones, patios, decks, gravel paths, more active with warm sunshine.
- Water source—Best is shallow, with no rushing or splashing water, in wet or low areas—areas for “mud puddling” often see large groups together.
- Shelter—Offer protection from the wind, cold, rain, hibernation, predators, and “roosting spots”; plant a windscreen of their preferred shrubs or trees to use for nectar, tall grasses, large trees and shrubs, plants with large leaves, piles of wood, or even butterfly houses.
- Supplemental food sources—These include feeders, ripe or rotting fruit, fruiting trees and shrubs; place near desired flowers and plants, and change food solution every 3-4 days to prevent molds and keep clean; keep filled and fresh from mid- to late April thru late October. Homemade nectar recipe: Mix 4 parts warm water with 1 part sugar, dissolve and stir. Keeps for 3-4 days. Do not use honey or sweeteners
- Plant both host plants and nectar flowers—Plant annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs; use native plants if possible for continuous bloom from spring into summer thru autumn; use different types of flower sizes and colors; plant in large groups and repeat in several areas—then watch them flutter from one drift to another all day long.
- Very important! Understand the butterflies’ life cycle—Learn the different host plants from egg to adult—the 4 stages of metamorphism: #1 begins as egg on specific host plant or plant family, #2 egg hatches into larva (caterpillar), #3 larva turn into chrysalis (pupa), and #4 adult butterfly emerges from chrysalis.
- Monarchs—The kings and queens of butterflies have an amazing story of migration.
- Summary—Butterfly gardening allows you to observe the active beauty of butterflies in your own backyard, preserve habitats they live in and desire, observe their many brilliant colors and behaviors, and enjoy the plants we use to attract them, which are highly valued in our landscapes.

Butterflies and Moths: What’s the Difference?

1. When active?
 - Butterflies during the daytime
 - Moths usually at night
2. Wings?
 - Butterflies’ wings are held upright along back during roosting, and they have separate front and rear sections
 - Moths fold their wings along their sides, forming a triangle shape, and the wing sections are connected
3. Antennae?
 - Butterflies’ antennae are fine and threadlike
 - Moths’ antennae are coarse and often feathery
4. Caterpillar? (a.k.a. larva)
 - Butterfly caterpillars are often smooth, with horns or spines
 - Moth caterpillars are usually hairy, also with spines and burs
5. Chrysalis or pupa?
 - Butterflies: chrysalis; attaches at one end of a twig or object
 - Moths: pupa; usually form a cocoon or covering and attach entire body to object (harder to get out)

Hummingbird Facts and Figures:

- Attracted to red, pink, orange, and most other brightly colored flowers. Very important to provide continuous bloom or their food source while they are in season. The hummingbird may visit up to 1,000 flowers per day!
- Prefers flowers that are tubular in shape from which they can lick out the nectar.
- Attracted to mass plantings or groups of flowers rather than a single plant.
- Important to provide flowers that have a long bloom period all season to keep them in your yard.
- Favorite food is nectar; they also eat insects and tree sap. They nearly eat their weight in nectar each day, so need to supply artificial food and many flowers all season long.
- To lure hummers to your garden, place fully stocked hummingbird feeders close to the flowering plants they favor.
- Can fly forward, backward, straight up, straight down, upside down, and hover in midair to feed.
- May beat wings up to 25 m.p.h. during normal flights and can reach nearly 75 m.p.h. at times—especially during courtship.
- May fly 500 miles nonstop during migration across the Gulf of Mexico and parts of Panama, then back again, usually along the coast of Mexico to Texas
- At a little more than a tenth of an ounce, an adult bird weighs less than a pencil.
- Nest is slightly bigger than a walnut; eggs are white and the size of a pea; need protection from wind, weather, and predators. Plant trees and shrubs for cover and food sources.
- Nest is woven from pine needles, dry flowers, moss, grass, lichens, and leaves. They use spiderwebs to hold it together and then line the inside with more webs and feathers.
- Heart beats at 250 beats per minute at rest, and more than 1,200 beats per minute while flying in search of food, and in defense of their territory.