



**CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY OF  
CALIFORNIA**

**CONSERVATION & EDUCATION  
OAKLAND ZOO**

# Butterfly Gardening In The Bay Area

## Why?

The vacant land in the Bay Area is disappearing with more and more human development. Consequently, the wildlife which depends on this land for survival is also disappearing. This is especially true for butterflies and other insects which also fall prey to chemical pesticide use, and the invasion of foreign plant and animal species. By creating a butterfly garden you will be working to offset this devastation.

## Where?

A "pocket habitat" butterfly garden can be created in any space, even in a small one, where sun, shelter from the wind, and shallow sources of water are available.

## When?

Get started right now. The winter rains give the plants a growing season before the butterflies arrive in the spring. But any time of year will do.

## How?

### Step 1: Observe and Research

Observe which butterflies already visit the plants in your area. Sit quietly in your yard with binoculars and a butterfly identification book. Note the butterflies which visit your neighborhood and then look up the plants which attract them.

### Step 2: Plant Nectar Plants

Certain plants attract a variety of butterflies. They are attracted through the flowers color and scent. Plant these plants in clusters and they will attract adult butterflies.

### Step 3: Plant Larval Plants

These plants, usually native and some weeds, attract butterflies to lay their eggs and allow their larvae (caterpillars) to feed and grow.

### Step 4: Provide shelter, sun and water

Female butterflies like sheltered, sunny spots for nectaring and laying eggs. Plant tall flowers, leave woodpiles out or wild spaces, or add a trellis for wind protection. Sunning gives energy to butterflies, so add flat rocks or bricks-- butterflies love to warm their wings. Water is important to both genders, but males like to "puddle" or drink from mud or wet sand. Slant a shadow pan filled with an inch of mud and water so that some of the material is exposed to air. Place perching rocks around.

### What to Expect?

Nothing in nature happens in hurry, so expect to spend more time repeating Step One! Make a notebook of your flying and crawling visitors. Be patient!

*Special Thanks  
to the Pollinator Partnership!*