



CONSERVATION
SOCIETY OF
CALIFORNIA
TAKING ACTION FOR WILDLIFE

OAKLAND ZOO



BUTTERFLY GARDENS

in the Bay Area

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?

October is planting season in our Mediterranean climate to take advantage of winter rains, but with a little extra effort, any time of year will work.

How?

Step 1: Pick a Spot

Creating a pocket habitat for butterflies can be anything from a single container to your entire backyard. You may want to do a little research on what plants will grow well in your space. Light, water, and soil are key factors in having success with any plant. Visit pollinator.org or calscape.org for picking the right plant for your place.

Step 2: Plant Nectar Plants

Many native plants attract a variety of butterflies through color and scent. Plant these plants in clusters and they will attract adult butterflies. See the list on the back for some ideas.

Step 3: Plant Larval Host Plants

Many butterflies will only use a specific native plant to host their young. Planting larval host plants invite 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 add a trellis for wind protection. Butterflies love to warm their wings for energy, so add flat rocks or bricks. Water is important to both sexes, but males like to "puddle" or drink from mud or wet sand. Slant a shallow pan filled with an inch of mud and water so that some of the mud is exposed to air. Place perching rocks in the water and mud.

Why?

The open spaces in the Bay Area are disappearing with more and more human development. Consequently, the wildlife which depends on this land to survive is also disappearing. This is especially true for butterflies and other insects which 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.

What to Expect?

Nothing in nature happens in a hurry, so expect to spend some time nurturing your garden and take some quiet moments to observe. Make a notebook of your flying and crawling visitors. Need help identifying your garden allies? Take a photo and upload it to iNaturalist.org or the app.

Resources*

*Sources used to create this guide and additional resources for more information.

Pollinator.org
iNaturalist.org
Calscape.org

Attracting Native Pollinators, The Xerces Society
California Native Plants for the Garden, Carol Bornstein, David Fross, & Bart O'Brien
Bringing Nature Home, Douglas W. Tallamy

California Native Plants for Butterflies

Shrubs & Subshrubs

Bladderpod, *Peritoma arborea*
Buckwheat, *Eriogonum* spp. *
Bush Sunflower, *Encelia californica*
California Lilac, *Ceanothus* spp. *
Chamise, *Adenostoma fasciculatum*
Coffeeberry, *Rhamnus californica* *
Coyote Bush, *Baccharis pilularis*
Elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*
Lotus, *Acmispon* spp. *
Mallow, *Malva* spp. *
Seaside Daisy, *Erigeron glaucus*
Toyon, *Heteromeles arbutifolia* *
Willow, *Salix* spp. *

Trees

Big Leaf Maple, *Acer macrofolium*
California Buckeye, *Aesculus californica*
Cherry, *Prunus* spp. *
Oak, *Quercus* spp. *

Perennials

California Aster, *Symphyotrichum chilense*
Checkerbloom, *Sidalcea* spp. *
Coyote Mint, *Monardella villosa*
Currant, *Ribes* spp. *
Lupine, *Lupinus* spp. *
Matilija Poppy, *Romneya coulteri*
Narrow Leaf Milkweed, *Asclepias fascicularis* *
Native Bunch Grass, *Poaceae* spp. *
Sage, *Salvia* spp.
Showy Milkweed, *Asclepias speciosa* *
Sticky Monkeyflower, *Diplacus aurantiacus*
Strawberry, *Fragaria* spp.
Verbena de la Mina, *Verbena lilacina*
Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Vines

California Pipevine, *Aristolochia californica* *

* larval host plants

Butterflies will also visit most native annual wildflowers

