

BUTTERFLY NECTAR & HOST PLANTS FOR TENNESSEE

With special reference to Middle Tennessee

People living in the Central Basin of Middle Tennessee, where there are four distinct seasons, experience fluctuations in climate that cause them to protect their plants from frost in May and allows them to observe anglewings on sunny, 70° days in January. Temperatures may range from below zero in the winter to over 100° in summer, with the average being about 58-60°. Average annual humidity is 70%, which can cause stress to both garden and gardener in the summer. The greatest amount of precipitation usually falls in late winter and early spring (48-52" per year) and most of the weather systems come in from the West. The frost periods are roughly October 15 to April 15, with an average growing season of about 198 days. The USDA zone is 6.

The Central Basin terrain may be level to gently rolling to hilly. Most soils are derived from the limestone underneath the surface. Some local soils have lost phosphorus, iron or calcium, and may need supplements. Soil depth may range from a few inches in the endemic cedar glades to several feet near rivers. In these areas, soil pH can vary from slightly acid to slightly alkaline.

Successful butterfly gardening in the Central Basin is based upon how well the gardener can seek and find the right plants for their local habitat, which may vary greatly. There are many native Tennessee plants which are especially suited to withstand our climate, and these should be sought first when planning the butterfly garden. Most of the plants listed herein can be found and will grow well in all other physiographic regions of Tennessee. Please consult the invasive plant list before planting anything. The website is at <http://www.se-eppc.org/states/TN/TNList.html>.

Butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) is a good nectaring plant, but is not recommended because it has been designated on Watch List A by the Tennessee Exotic Pest Plant Council (see <http://www.se-eppc.org>). This designation means that the plant may naturalize and may become a problem in the future. The plant could "escape" to our natural areas--parks, wildlife management areas or private lands which could cause major problems for wildlife, people, and native plants.

Instead of butterfly bush, try one of our native honeysuckles (*Diervilla*), chaste tree (*Vitex*), glossy abelia (*Abelia*), false indigo (*Amorpha*), or lantana (*Lantana*), which is an annual in Tennessee. Along with common plantain (*Plantago major*), you will probably have English plantain in your yard. It is considered undesirable by some (for its appearance), but is still the hostplant for the beautiful Common Buckeye.

TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

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

FLOWER COMMENTS	HEIGHT	COLOR	SEASON	BUTTERFLIES	
(N) Spring beauty (<i>Claytonia</i> spp) woodland soil	4-12"	pink, white	3-5	Falcate Orangetip	rich
(N) Toothwort (<i>Dentaria</i> spp) wooded shade	8-12"	white	3-5	W. Virginia White, Falcate Orangetip	
(N) Rose verbena (<i>Verbena canadensis</i>) "Homestead Purple" good cultivar	6-18"	deep pink, purple	3-9		
(N) Redbud tree (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>) moist to dry soil	20-35'	pink	4-5	Hairstreaks & Duskywings	
(N) Locust tree (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>) upland, dry soil	50-75'	white	4-6	Silver-spotted Skipper	
*(N) Coral honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>) vine only native		scarlet	4-9		use

(A) Alyssum (<i>Lobularia maritima</i>) border plant	8-12"	white	4-11	Skippers	good
(A) Marigold (<i>Tagetes</i>) adaptable, full sun	10-24"	yellow, gold	4-11	Skippers	
*(N) Milkweed (<i>Asclepias</i> spp) genera, 19 native species	2-4'	pink, white, orange	5-9	many	4
(A) Impatiens (<i>Impatiens</i> spp) moist shade	1-2'	red	5-10	Cloudless Sulphur	
(A) Dahlia (<i>Dahlia</i> spp) in spring	varies	various	5-11	Duskywings	plant
*(A) Dwarf zinnia (<i>Zinnia</i> spp) growing season	18"	various	5-11	many	long
*(A) Lantana (<i>Lantana</i> spp) not over-winter	0-3'	many	5-11	many	does
(A) Shasta daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>) foliage is evergreen	1-3'	white	6-7	Sulphurs, American Snout	
(N) Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>) needs low, wet area	3-10'	white	6-8	Swallowtails & Ladies	
(N) Coreopsis (<i>Coreopsis</i> spp) native species	3-10'	yellow	6-9	many	8
(N) Swamp rose mallow (<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>) needs wet, sunny area	4-7'	white	6-9	several	
*(A) Mexican sunflower (<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>) grows well from seed	5-6'	orange	6-10	Sulphurs, Ladies,	
*(N) Purple coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>) to grow from seed	2-6'	pink	6-10	many	easy
(N/A) Gaura (<i>Gaura</i> spp) roots 4 native species	2-3'	pink/white	6-11	several	long
(A) Nemesis (<i>Nemesis</i> spp) fragrant; needs moist soil	12-18"	various	6-11	many	
*(N)Blazing star (<i>Liatris</i> spp) native species	8"-5'	purple	7-9	many	7
(N) Cardinal flower (<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>) needs moist soil	2-6'	red	7-9	Sulphurs	
*(N) Joe-pye-weed (<i>Eupatorium</i> spp) native species	2-10'	pink	7-9	Swallowtails	3
(N) Pickerel-weed (<i>Pontederia cordata</i>) shallow water, full sun	2'	violet-blue	7-9	several	
(N) Mistflower (<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>) adaptable	1-3'	blue	7-10	many	

(N)Great blue lobelia (<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>) beautiful fall color	2-5'	purple	8-9	several	
(N) New England aster (<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>) likes moist to wet soil	3-5'	purple	8-10	various	
(A) Lavender (<i>Lavandula</i> spp) aromatic cultivars	varies	purple	varies	many	many
*(N) Phlox (<i>Phlox</i> spp) native species	1-4'	pink, blue, white	varies	Hairstreaks	11
(N/A) Sages (<i>Salvia</i> spp) many selections	varies	various	varies	many	

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

NAME COMMENTS	HEIGHT	CATERPILLARS	
(N)American Wisteria (<i>Wisteria frutescens</i>) Falls ” cultivar best	vine	Silver-spotted Skipper	“Amethyst
(N) Black Cherry tree (<i>Prunus serotina</i>) many other species	75'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple, Silkmoths	feeds
(A) Canna (<i>Canna generalis</i>) grow from bulbs	6'	Brazilian Skipper	easy to
(N) Elm trees (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.) drought tolerant	varies	Question Mark	shade and
(A) English plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>) common lawn “weed”	10”	Common Buckeye	
(N) Milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.) native species	varies	Monarch	13
(N) Passionvine (<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>) wildly, but controllable	vine	Gulf and Variegated Fritillaries	spreads
(N) Pipevine (<i>Aristolochia tomentosa</i>)	vine	Pipevine Swallowtail	
(A) Parsley, dill, fennel herbs variety of choices	<3'	Black Swallowtail	wide
(N) Pussy toes (<i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>) shade; allelopathic	8”	American Lady	dry
(A) Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> spp) also good for nectaring	8-20”	Clouded Sulphur	Red clover
(A) Rue (<i>Ruta graveolens</i>) well-drained soil	2'	Giant and Black Swallowtails	sun, moist

(N) Smooth rock cress (<i>Arabis laevigata</i>) spring only	14"	Falcate Orangetip	
(N) Spicebush (<i>Lindera benzoin</i>) shade/part sun	6-12'	Spicebush Swallowtail	dappled
(N) Toothworts (<i>Dentaria</i> spp) spring only	8-12"	West Virginia White	shade,
(N) Violets (<i>Viola</i> spp) shade	4-6"	Variegated Fritillary	cool

BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR GARDEN & YARD

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

NAME	FLIGHT PERIOD	CATERPILLAR SEASON	HOSTPLANTS	COMMENTS
Black Swallowtail	4-10	7-9	dill, fennel, parsley, rue	
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	4-9	8-9	cherry trees	
Pipevine Swallowtail	4-9	4-8	pipevine	
Zebra Swallowtail to find	4-8	4-6	pawpaw trees (<i>Asimina triloba</i>)	Larva difficult
Giant Swallowtail	5-9	6-9	Hoptree (<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>)	
Spicebush Swallowtail	4-9	6-8	spicebush, sassafras (<i>Sassafras albidum</i>)	
Cabbage White	3-11	7-8	cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts	
Orange Sulphur	3-10	5-9	clovers	
Cloudless Sulphur	4-10	8-9	partridge pea, senna (<i>Senna marilandica</i>)	
Red-banded Hairstreak	4-9	4-9	sumac detritus	
Eastern Tailed-Blue	4-10	5-9	pea family	
American Snout	4-9	7-8	hackberry trees (<i>Celtis</i> spp)	
Gulf Fritillary	7-11	7-10	passionvine	
Variegated Fritillary	4-10	6-8	violets, passionvine	
Great Spangled Fritillary	5-9	6-8	violets	
Pearl Crescent	4-10	4-10	asters (<i>Aster</i> spp)	

American Lady 4-11	4-10	pussy toes, pearly everlasting (<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>)	
Painted Lady 4-11 thistles very invasive	4-10	thistles (<i>Cirsium discolor & canadense</i>)	Some alien
Common Buckeye 4-11	4-10	plantains (<i>Plantago</i> spp)	
Hackberry Emperor 4-9	5-8	hackberry trees	
Carolina Satyr 4-10	4-10	grasses	
Monarch 6-10	4-9	milkweeds	
Red Admiral 4-10	4-9	stinging nettle (<i>Urtica chamaedryoides</i>)	Causes itching
Viceroy 5-9	5-9	willows (<i>Salix</i> spp)	
Silver-spotted Skipper 4-10	5-9	pea family, black locust (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>)	
Sachem 5-10	6-10	grasses	

“Easily obtainable chemicals used in the home garden to get rid of unwanted insects such as Japanese beetles, aphids, or gnats will also kill butterflies in all life stages: eggs, caterpillars, chrysalids and adults. If you want more butterflies in your yard, consider removing plant pests by hand or with a non-toxic soap-and-water spray solution.” From Great Garden Formulas and Great Garden Fix-Its, Rodale Press, 1998 & 2001.

Pest Patrol Bucket Blend

Ingredients and Supplies: 1 quart of water; 1 small bucket; 1 teaspoon of dishwashing liquid; 2 tablespoons cooking oil (any type)

Put 2-3 inches of water into bucket; add dishwashing liquid and oil and mix. The oil will float to the top and form small droplets. Gather unwanted insects and toss into pail. In the cool of the morning, before insects can fly easily, plants can be lightly tapped, causing insects to fall into the solution. The mixture will last for many days.

This list was compiled by the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. Visit us at our website at www.nabamidtn.org or contact us at NABA, 502 Jefferson Davis Drive, Franklin, TN 37069 for more information including how to become a member of our group.

The North American Butterfly Association is a non-profit organization which promotes the joys of non-consumptive, recreational butterflying including listing, gardening, observation, photography, rearing and conservation. Our Middle Tennessee Chapter wants to invite you to participate in our group activities and be a part of a vibrant community of people who enjoy butterflies.