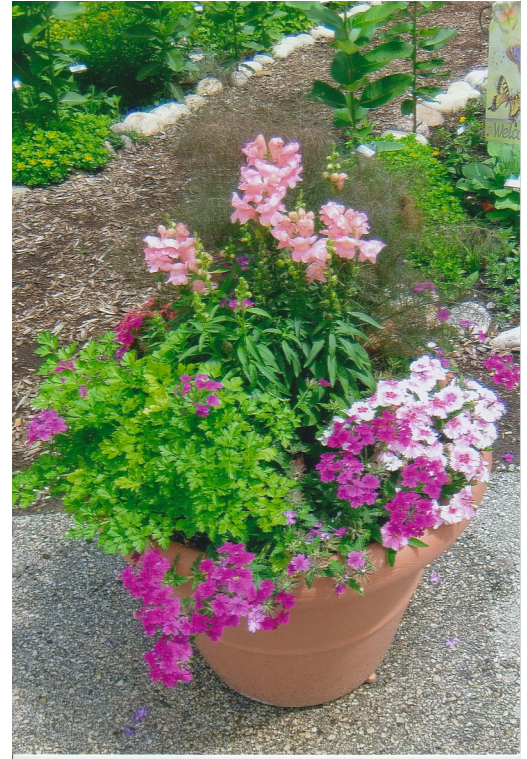


# Butterfly Habitat Gardens in Pots or Hanging Baskets



A sunny patio, porch or balcony can be home to your own butterfly habitat garden. Because a habitat garden supports the entire life cycle of a butterfly, it must provide both nectar plants for butterflies to eat and host plants on which they can lay eggs. Caterpillars hatch from the eggs, eat the leaves of the host plants, change into chrysalis form, and finally emerge as butterflies. The entire process takes only about four or five weeks!



All you need to create your own butterfly habitat is a pot or hanging basket, some good potting mix, and a variety of nectar and host plants. If your pot or basket is large enough, plant multiple identical plants together to make them more visible and attractive to butterflies. Butterflies are attracted to purple, orange, yellow and red flowers. Plants that attract butterflies are:



Marigolds



Monarch Butterfly on Lantana

## Butterfly Nectar Plants:

Alyssum – *Lobularia maritima* Cosmos –  
Cosmos spp.

Dianthus – *Dianthus chinensis* Lantana –  
Lantana hybrids (trailing or upright)

Marigolds – *Tagetes patula*

Pentas – *Pentas* spp.

Verbena – *Verbena* hybrids (trailing or  
upright)

Zinnias (*Profusion* series) shorter variety



Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly on Pentas

## Host plants and the butterflies they attract:

Cleome (Cleome hassleriana) - host plant for Cabbage White

Curry plant (Helichrysum italicum) - host plant for American Lady

Dill (Anethum graveolens) - host plant for Black Swallowtail

Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare) - host plant for Black Swallowtail

Licorice plant (Helichrysum petiolare) trailing - host plant for American Lady

Marigold (Tagetes patula) - host plant to Dainty Sulphur

Parsley (Curled or Flat-leaved) - host plant for Black Swallowtail

Snapdragon (Antirrhinum majus) - host plant for the Common Buckeye



Black Swallowtail Caterpillar on Dill



Black Swallowtail Laying Eggs on Fennel

For an easy planting design, plant taller plants in the center and then fill in with medium sized plants, allowing trailing plants to spill over the edge. After planting, be sure to watch the soil for even moisture. Keep in mind that containers dry out faster than gardens.

Butterfly habitat gardens in containers bring enjoyment to both children and adults. Experiencing butterflies and caterpillars up close and personal can be both fun and educational. If butterflies and their habitats interest you, additional resources can be found at your local library and on a variety of websites (*see list below*).

### BUTTERFLY REFERENCES:

[www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org) North American Butterfly Association (NABA)

[www.raisingbutterflies.org](http://www.raisingbutterflies.org) (how to raise a variety of butterflies)

[www.urbanext.illinois.edu/containergardening](http://www.urbanext.illinois.edu/containergardening), "Successful Container Gardens"

The Life Cycles of Butterflies by Judy Burris and Wayne Richards (Storey Publishing, 2001)

<http://milwaukee.uwex.edu> (Horticulture, Horticulture Brochures and Factsheets, Container Gardening)



This publication was produced by SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners using university research-based information.