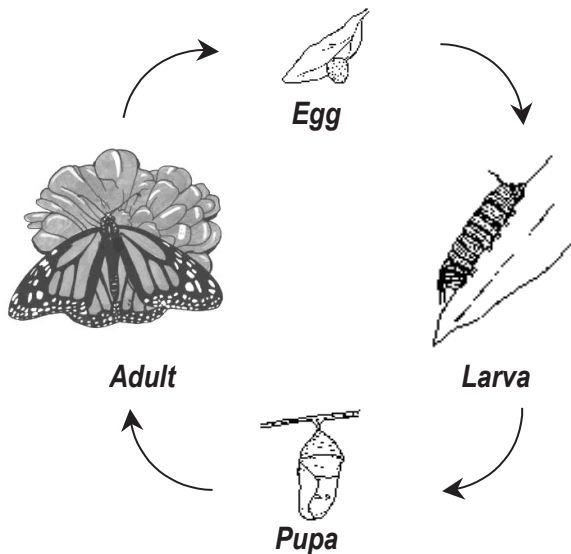


## WHAT IS A BUTTERFLY?

Butterflies are members of the insect order Lepidoptera, a word that describes the presence of scales on their wings. It is derived from the Greek words *lepis*, for scale, and *pteron*, for wing. Butterflies, like other insects, have segmented bodies divided into three major parts: head, thorax, and abdomen. Every butterfly has four stages to its life: **egg**, **caterpillar (larva)**, **chrysalis (pupa)**, and **adult**. The time spent in each stage varies with butterfly species. The gradual passage through the four stages is known as **metamorphosis**. The cycle begins as the adult female lays her eggs on the appropriate caterpillar food plant.

### FOUR STAGES OF METAMORPHOSIS



### PLACES TO SEE BUTTERFLY GARDENS

Blowing Rocks Preserve  
Gumbo Limbo Nature Center  
Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge  
Okeehetee Nature Center  
Daggerwing Nature Center  
Mounts Botanical Garden  
Robert J. Huckshorn Arboretum-FAU Jupiter

### NURSERIES THAT SELL BUTTERFLY PLANTS

Meadow Beauty Nursery—Lake Worth  
561-966-6848  
Mesozoic Landscaping—Boynton Beach  
561-967-2630  
Native Choice Nursery—Loxahatchee  
561-756-4370  
Indian Trails Native Nursery—Lake Worth  
561-641-9488

### BUTTERFLY BOOKS

Butterflies through Binoculars: A Field, Finding and Gardening Guide to Butterflies in Florida, by Jeffrey Glassberg, Marc Minno and John Calhoun

Butterflies of the East Coast by Rick Cech

Florida Butterfly Gardening,  
by Marc and Maria Minno

### ORGANIZATIONS

North American Butterfly Association (NABA)—  
ATALA CHAPTER

To find out about meetings and field trips,  
call the butterfly hotline at 561/706-6732

or check out their web page at:  
<http://www.nabapalmbeach.org>

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**Cover Artwork:** Atala Hairstreak lifecycle on  
Coontie by Leslie Smith

# Butterfly Gardening In South Florida



A  
beginner's guide  
to creating  
your backyard  
butterfly garden

## WHAT IS A BUTTERFLY GARDEN?

Where have all the butterflies gone? Few sights are more delightful than that of a butterfly flitting from flower to flower. But sadly, butterflies have become all too rare in our rapidly changing environment.

Due in part to increasing environmental awareness, more and more people are changing their home landscaping methods in order to attract and conserve butterflies. Reducing the use of pesticides and growing butterfly-friendly plants are simple ways to invite butterflies to your doorstep. Butterfly Gardening is a concept designed to attract butterflies through the growing of two types of plants: food plants for the caterpillars and nectar plants for the adults.

Choosing the location for your garden is very important. Butterflies are “sun-loving” — they use their wings as solar panels as they need to have their bodies at a certain temperature before they can fly. Also, most butterfly plants prefer full sun. Shrubs and trees will provide the protection that butterflies need on windy or rainy days, as well as providing a location for butterflies to roost at night. Grouping plants with similar needs for mass effect to attract butterflies is also helpful.

This brochure includes information on the types of plants needed to start a butterfly garden and will introduce you to just a few of the species of butterflies which are found in south Florida. Once you have an active butterfly garden, you may want to learn the butterflies you are seeing. Close-focusing binoculars and a good field guide are essential for this effort.



Zebra Heliconian  
Florida's State Butterfly

## CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

Butterflies must have plants on which to lay their eggs. Butterflies have evolved with the native plants of a particular ecosystem and, therefore, are “finicky” eaters. In fact, most butterflies will only eat one type of plant making it very important to choose the correct plants for the butterflies that are found in your area. Butterflies are equipped with a highly sensitive sense of smell, which enables them to identify their caterpillar food plants from great distances. Some excellent caterpillar food sources for our area are listed below – many of these are available in native varieties. If you choose an exotic species, make sure that it is not listed as an “invasive” exotic.

BUTTERFLY	CATERPILLAR FOOD
Zebra Heliconian	**Passionvine
Gulf Fritillary	<i>Passiflora</i> spp.
Julia Heliconian	
Monarch	**Milkweed
Queen	<i>Asclepias</i> spp.
Polydamas Swallowtail	Pipevine
	<i>Aristolochia</i> spp.
Black Swallowtail	Parlsey, Fennel, Dill
Orange-barred Sulphur	<i>Cassia</i> , * <i>Senna</i> and
Cloudless Sulphur	* <i>Chaemecrista</i> spp.
Giant Swallowtail	Citrus; *Wild Lime
Palamedes Swallowtail	*Red Bay
Cassius Blue	**Plumbago
Atala	*Coontie

\*Native Plant  
\*\*Native varieties available

## NECTAR PLANTS

Flowering nectar plants are the most important source of food and nourishment for adult butterflies. Nectar is a sweet, sugary substance produced by many flowers. The butterfly obtains sugars from it that it needs for energy to survive.

\*Firebush  
*Hamelia patens*

\*\*Porterweed  
*Stachytarpheta* spp.

\*Scorpiantail Heliotrope  
*Heliotropium angiospermum*

*Ageratum* spp.

\*Blue Mistflower  
*Conoclinium coelestinum*

Golden Dewdrop  
*Duranta repens*

\*Butterfly Sage  
*Cordia globosa*

\*Wild Coffee  
*Psychotria nervosa*

\*Fiddlewood  
*Citharexylum spinosum*

*Jatropha* spp.

\*\*Lantana  
*L. involucrata* or *depressa*

Pentas (Red & Hot Pink esp.)

Butterfly Bush  
*Buddleia* spp.

\*Native Plant  
\*\*Native varieties available