

BUTTERFLY Gardening

Fernbank Science Center
Compost Site and Gardens

DeKalb County Schools



Brightly colored butterflies will add a welcome color and movement to your backyard habitat. In order to attract butterflies successfully to your yard you will need plants that satisfy the needs of all the stages of a butterfly's life cycle. Butterflies have different requirements for places they lay their eggs, food for larval stage (caterpillar), a safe place to form a chrysalis and a source of nectar for the adult butterfly.

Before you begin to plant your garden, it is helpful to decide what species of butterfly you are interested in attracting, and plan your plant purchases accordingly. Adult butterflies have favorite colors just like we do. They are attracted to yellow, red, orange, pink or purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered, with short flower tubes which allow the butterflies to reach the nectar with their proboscises. These flowers should be grown in open sunny

sites as the adults will rarely feed on plants in the shade. Because butterflies are attracted to large clumps of color, it is helpful to plant your flowers in large masses. Butterfly gardens are places where grasses and weeds should be welcome. Butterfly eggs and larvae are sought out by predators such as birds, lizards, spiders, parasite flies and wasps. These grasses offer a place to hide. Some grasses are even larval host plants for several species of butterfly. Use caution when removing old leaves and dead plant parts; they may be harboring a future butterfly! Some butterflies feed on rotting fruit. If it bothers you to leave rotting fruit on the tree or ground, try making a feeding station with a shallow saucer. You can use rotten fruit, stale beer and sugar or just place a few banana peels around. Some male butterflies are attracted to shallow pools with muddy edges. When they congregate, it is called a "puddle party." After a cool night, butterflies need to warm their wing muscles by sitting in the sun. Several strategically placed rocks will become the perfect spots to bask.

Please remember that a butterfly garden is no place for PESTICIDES or HERBICIDES.

The following list includes most of the common and locally abundant butterflies found in Georgia. It does not include all butterflies that have been seen in Georgia.

GEORGIA BUTTERFLIES

BUTTERFLY	FLIGHT PERIOD	LARVAL HOST PLANT	ADULT NECTAR PLANT
Pipeline Swallowtail <i>Battus philenor</i>	Feb - Nov	Pipevines	Thistles, bergamot, lilac, common azaleas, phlox, teasel, azaleas, lantana, petunias, verbenas
Polydamas Swallowtail <i>Battus polydamas</i>	Apr - Nov	Pipeline (Aristolochia species)	Lantana, honeysuckle, soapweed
Zebra Swallowtail <i>Euryides marcellus</i>	Mar - Dec	Young pawpaw	Blueberry, blackberry, lilac, redbud, verbena, dogbane, common milkweed
Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i>	Apr - Oct	Queen Anne's Lace, carrot, celery, dill	Red clover, milkweed, thistles
Giant Swallowtail <i>Papilio cresphontes</i>	All Year	Trees and herbs of the citrus family, prickly ash, hop tree	Lantana, azalea, bougainvillea, bouncing Bet, dame's rocket, goldenrod, Japanese honeysuckle, swamp milkweed
E. Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i>	Feb - Nov	Wild cherry, sweetbay, basswood, tulip tree, birch, ash, cottonwood, mountain ash, willow	Wild cherry, lilac
Spicebush Swallowtail <i>Papilio troilus</i>	Apr - Oct	Spicebush, sassafras tree, tulip tree, sweetbay, camphor, redbay	Japanese honeysuckle, jewelweed, thistles, milkweed, azalea, dogbane, lantana, mimosa, sweet pepperbush
Palamedes Swallowtail <i>Papilio palamedes</i>	Mar - Dec	Laurel family, especially redbay	Sweet pepperbush, thistles, blue flag, azalea

Checkered White <i>Pontia protodice</i>	Mar - Nov	Mustard family, including cabbage, and caper family	Hedge mustards, composites, alfalfa
W. Virginia White <i>Pieris virginiensis</i>	Apr - May	Toothworts in the mustard family	Toothworts, spring beauty, violets and other plants
Cabbage White <i>Pieris rapae</i>	Spr - Sum	Plants in the mustard family and occasionally some in the caper family	Wide array of plants including mustards, dandelion, red clover, asters, mints
Great Southern White <i>Ascia monuste</i>	All Year	Plants in the mustard family and occasionally some in the caper family	Many species of flowers including saltwort, lantana and verbena
Falcate Orangetip <i>Anthocharis midea</i>	Mar - June	Plants in the mustard family including rock cress and winter cress	Mustards, violets and others
Clouded Sulphur <i>Colias philodice</i>	Mar - Nov	Plants in the pea family, including alfalfa, white clover, pea	Flower nectar of many plants
Orange Sulphur <i>Colias eurytheme</i>	Mar - Nov	Plants in the pea family including alfalfa, white clover, white sweet clover	Dandelion, milkweeds, goldenrods, asters
Southern Dogface <i>Zerene cesonia</i>	All Year	Small-leaved plants in the pea family including alfalfa, prairie clovers, indigo, clover	Alfalfa, coreopsis, houstonia, verbena
Cloudless Sulphur <i>Phoebis sennae</i>	All Year	Cassia species in the pea family	Many different flowers with long tubes including cordia, bougainvillea, cardinal flower, hibiscus, lantana, wild morning glory
Orange-barred Sulphur <i>Phoebis philea</i>	Summer	Cassia species in the pea family	Flower nectar of many plants
Statira Sulphur <i>Phoebis statira</i>	Feb - Nov	Flowers, mud	Red-flowered plants including scarlet bush
Barred Yellow <i>Eurema daira</i>	All Year	Pencil flower, joint vetches, and other plants in the pea family	Great variety of flowers including joint vetches, shepherd's needle
Little Yellow <i>Eurema lisa</i>	Late Spring/ Early Fall	Partridge pea and wild sensitive plant in the pea family	Flowers in the aster family including goldenrods, asters
Sleepy Orange <i>Eurema nicippe</i>	All Year	Cassia species in the pea family	Flower nectar of many plants
Dainty Sulphur <i>Nathalis iole</i>	All Year	Low-growing plants in the aster family especially shepherd's needle, sneezeweed, fetid marigold, cultivated marigold	Labrador tea, asters, wild marigold, rabbitbrush, and others
Harvester <i>Feniseca tarquinius</i>	Feb - Sept	Mistletoe growing on several tree species	Adult's short proboscis is suited for feeding on aphid honeydew; they do not sip flower nectar
American Copper <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	April - Sept	Wild cherry, wild plum, chokecherry	Common buttercup, white clover, butterfly weed, yarrow, ox-eye daisy and various composites
Great Purple Hairstreak <i>Atlides halesus</i>	Mar - Dec	Herbs of the buckwheat family including sheep sorrel, curled dock	Goldenrod, Hercules club, shepherd's needle, sweet pepperbush, wild plum
Coral Hairstreak <i>Satyrium titus</i>	May - Aug	Many species of oak, walnut, hickory	Butterflyweed, New Jersey tea, dogbane and sulphur flower
Edwards Hairstreak <i>Satyrium edwardsii</i>	May - July	Scrub oak and occasionally black oak	Butterfly milkweed, New Jersey tea, dogbane, sulphur flower
Banded Hairstreak <i>Satyrium calanus</i>	Apr - May	Many species of oak, walnut and hickory	Dogbane, common milkweed (preferred), chinquapin, small-flowered dogwood, New Jersey tea, meadowsweet, staghorn sumac, white sweet clover, yarrow
Hickory Hairstreak <i>Satyrium caryaevorum</i>	June - Aug	Mostly hickory; also ash, chestnut and oak species	Common milkweed, dogbane, New Jersey tea, staghorn sumac, and white sweet clover
King's Hairstreak <i>Satyrium kingi</i>	May - June	Common sweetleaf	Alegheny chinuapin and sourwood are the only reported nectar sources
Striped Hairstreak <i>Satyrium liparops</i>	May	Several woody trees and shrubs in the rose family including American plum and heath family; also reports for hornbeam, oak and willow	Chinquapin, common milkweed, dogbane, goldenrod, meadowsweet, New Jersey tea, staghorn sumac, Viburnum and white sweet clover

Southern Hairstreak <i>Fixsenia favonius</i>	Mar - June	Various oaks	Flower nectar
Brown Elfin <i>Callophrys augustinus</i>	Mar - Apr	Members of the heath family including sugar huckleberry and Labrador tea	Blueberry, footsteps-of-spring, spicebush, willow, winter cress and wild plum
Frosted Elfin <i>Callophrys irus</i>	Mar - Apr	Members of the pea family: wild indigo and lupine; occasionally blue false indigo and rattlebox	Flower nectar
Henry's Elfin <i>Callophrys henrici</i>	Feb - May	Redbud, huckleberries and blueberries, Mexican buckeye and <i>Viburnum</i> species	Where redbud is the caterpillar host, its flowers are the main nectar supply for adults; if not, willows, wild plum and hawthorn
Eastern Pine Elfin <i>Callophrys niphon</i>	Mar - June	Various hard pines including scrub pine, jack pine, Eastern white pine	Blueberry, cinquefoil, chickweed, common milkweed
Juniper Hairstreak <i>Callophrys gryneus</i>	Feb - Sept	Red cedar, California juniper and Utah juniper	Winter cress, dogbane, common milkweed, wild carrot, shepherd's needle, butterflyweed, white sweet clover and others
Hessel's Hairstreak <i>Callophrys hesseli</i>	Apr - July	Atlantic white cedar	Swamp milkweed, shadbush, sand myrtle, sweet pepperbush, highbush blueberry, buttonbush and dogbane
White M Hairstreak <i>Parrhasius m-album</i>	Feb - Oct	Live oak and other oak species	Viburnum, sumac, sourwood, wild plum, poinsettia, sweet pepperbush, common milkweed, lantana, dogwood, goldenrod
Gray Hairstreak <i>Strymon melinus</i>	Feb - Nov	Flowers and fruits from an almost endless variety of plants; most often from pea and mallow families including beans, clovers, cotton, mallow	Dogbane, milkweed, mint, winter-cress, goldenrod, tick trefoil, white sweet clover
Red-banded Hairstreak <i>Calycopis cecrops</i>	Apr - Oct	Fallen leaves of wax myrtle, dwarf sumac, staghorn sumac and several oaks	Yarrow, wild cherry, tickseed sunflower, sumac, sweet pepperbush, New Jersey tea, common milkweed, dogbane
Early Hairstreak <i>Erora laeta</i>	Apr - Sept	Beech and beaked hazel	Fleabane, ox-eye daisy and hardtack
Western Pygmy-Blue <i>Brephidium exile</i>	All Year	Pigweed, saltbush species, others in goosefoot family	Flower nectar
Cassius Blue <i>Leptotes cassius</i>	All Year	Ornamental leadwort, rattlebox, hairy milk pea, lima bean	Shepherd's needle, lippia and many other flowers
Ceraunus Blue <i>Hemiargus ceraunus</i>	Late Summer	A variety of woody legumes including partridge pea, mesquite and rosary pea	Flower nectar
Eastern Tailed-Blue <i>Everes comyntas</i>	Feb - Nov	Plants in the pea family including yellow sweet clover, alfalfa, various species of vetch, clover, wild pea, bush clover; and others	This butterfly has a low flight and short proboscis. They are found at flowers close to the ground, open or short-tubed: white sweet clover, shepherd's needle, wild strawberry, winter-cress, cinquefoils, asters, and others.
Spring Azure <i>Celastrina ladon</i>	Jan - Oct	Flowers of a variety of woody shrubs and occasionally herbs including dogwood, New Jersey tea, meadowsweet	Dogbane, privet, New Jersey tea, blackberry, common milkweed
Summer Azure <i>Celastrina ladon neglecta</i>	June - Oct	Racemose dogwood, New Jersey Tea, and other plants.	Flower nectar
Silvery Blue <i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus</i>	Mar - Aug	Species in the pea family	Nectar from flowers including <i>Asteraceae</i>
Little Metalmark <i>Calephelis virginiensis</i>	Mar - Oct	Yellow thistle	Short-flowered composites including yarrow, lance-leaved coreopsis, fine-leaved sneezeweed and other blue mist flowers
Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	All Year	Various species of passion-vine including maypops and running pop	Lantana, shepherd's needle, cordias, composites and others
Zebra <i>Heliconius charitonius</i>	Summer	Passion-vine	Flower nectar and pollen, which are gathered on a set foraging route or "trap-line"; favorite plants include lantana and shepherd's needle
Varigated Fritillary <i>Euptoieta claudia</i>	Feb - Dec	A variety of plants in several families including maypops, may apple, violets, purslane, stonecrop and moonseed	Butterfly weed, common milkweed, dogbane, peppermint, red clover, swamp milkweed and tickseed sunflower

Diana <i>Speyeria aphrodite</i>	June - Sept	Violets	Dung and flower nectar from plants including common and swamp milkweed, ironweed, red clover and butterfly bush
Great Spangled Fritillary <i>Speyeria cybele</i>	June - Sept	Various violet species	Milkweeds, thistles, ironweed, dogbane, mountain laurel, Verbena, vetch, bergamot, red clover, joe-pye weed and purple coneflower
Aphrodite Fritillary <i>Speyeria aphrodite</i>	June - Sept	Various violet species including northern downy violet and lance-leaved violet	Milkweed and viper's bugloss, among others
Gorgone Checkerspot <i>Chlosyne gorgone</i>	Apr - Sept	<i>Asteraceae</i> including sunflower and crosswort species	Nectar, especially from yellow flowers
Silvery Checkerspot <i>Chlosyne nycteis</i>	May - Sept	Many different composites including black-eyed susan, sunflowers and wingstem	Nectar from flowers of red clover, common milkweed and dogbane
Harris' Checkerspot <i>Chlosyne harrisii</i>	June - July	Flat-topped white aster	Flower nectar
Texan Crescent <i>Phyciodes texana</i>	Mar - Nov	Various low plants of the <i>Acanthus</i> family	Flower nectar
Phaon Crescent <i>Phyciodes phaon</i>	Feb - Oct	Fogfruit and mat grass in the verbena family	Nectar from flowers of <i>lippia</i> and composites including shepherd's needle
Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i>	All Year	Several species of smooth-leaved true asters	Nectar from a great number of flowers including dogbane, swamp milkweed, shepherd's needle, aster and winter-cress
Tawny-edged Skipper <i>Polites themistocles</i>	May - July	Wavy-leaved aster and perhaps other true asters	Flower nectar
Crossline Skipper <i>Polites origenes</i>	May - Sept	Purpletop, little bluestem and other grasses.	White, pink, or purple flowers are preferred including purple vetch, red clover, selfheal, dogbane, shrub houstonia, New Jersey tea, and New York ironweed.
Whirlabout <i>Polites vibex</i>	April - Sept	Grasses including Bermuda grass, St. Augustine grass and thin paspalum	Nectar from flowers including shepherd's needle and lantana
Southern Broken-Dash <i>Wallengrenia otho</i>	April - Oct	Paspalum and St. Augustine grass	Nectar from flowers including pickerelweed, selfheal, and sweet pepperbush
Northern Broken-Dash <i>Wallengrenia egeremet</i>	May - Oct	Panic grasses including deertongue grass	Nectar from white, pink, or purple flowers is favored including dogbane, red clover, New Jersey tea, and sweet pepperbush. Many other flowers are visited.
Little Glassywing <i>Pompeius verna</i>	April - Sept	Purpletop	Nectar from white, pink, and purple flowers is preferred, including dogbane, selfheal, peppermint, joe-pye weed, and common and swamp milkweeds. Yellow flowers are visited when others are unavailable.
Sachem <i>Atalopedes campestris</i>	Mar - Dec	Grasses including Bermuda grass, crabgrass, St. Augustine grass, and goosegrass	Nectar from many flowers including swamp and common milkweeds, buttonbush, dogbane, peppermint, red clover, tickseed sunflower, thistles, New York ironweed, marigold, and asters
Delaware Skipper <i>Anatrytone logan</i>	May - Sept	Various grasses including big bluestem, switchgrass and woolly beard grass	Nectar from pink and white flowers including swamp and common milkweeds, shrub houstonia, mountain mint, marsh fleabane, sweet pepperbush, buttonbush, thistles, and pickerelweed
Zabulon Skipper <i>Poanes zabulon</i>	All Year	Grasses including lovegrass, purpletop, bluegrass, wheatgrass, orchardgrass, wildrye and bentgrass	Nectar from a variety of flowers including the exotics Japanese honeysuckle, red clover, everlasting pea, and selfheal; and the natives blackberry, purple vetch, common milkweed, buttonbush, joe-pye weed, and thistles
Dun Skipper <i>Euphyes vestris</i>	Mar - Oct	Various sedges including chufa flatsedge and sun sedge	Nectar from white, pink, or purple flowers including common milkweed, purple vetch, selfheal, peppermint, dogbane, New Jersey tea, and viper's bugloss
Common Roadside-Skipper <i>Amblyscirtes vialis</i>	Mar - Sept	Various grasses including wild oats, bent grass, bluegrass, Bermuda grass and Indian woodoats grass	These skippers prefer nectar from low-growing blue flowers including verbena and selfheal.
Eufala Skipper <i>Lerodea eufala</i>	Feb - Oct	Various grasses including Johnson grass, Bermuda grass and sugarcane	Nectar from flowers including croton, alfalfa, composites, lippia, and others

Ocola Skipper <i>Panoquina ocola</i>	Summer	Rice, sugarcane and trompetilla grass	Nectar from flowers of lantana, shepherd's needle, swamp milkweed, buttonbush, and pickernelweed
Baltimore <i>Euphydryas phaeton</i>	May - June	Plants where eggs are laid and eaten before hibernation are turtlehead, hairy beardtongue, English plantain and false foxglove; overwintering caterpillars may use these plants, but may also wander and feed on arrowwood, common lousewort, Japanese honeysuckle and white ash	Milkweed, viburnum and wild rose
Question Mark <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i>	Feb - Sept	American elm, red elm, hackberry, Japanese hop, nettles and false nettle	Rotting fruit, tree sap, dung, carrion (when these are unavailable, Question Marks visit flowers such as common milkweed, aster and sweet pepperbush)
Eastern Comma <i>Polygonia comma</i>	Feb - Oct	All members of the elm and nettle families including American elm, hops, nettle, false nettle and wood nettle	Rotting fruit and tree sap
Green Comma <i>Polygonia faunus</i>	May - Aug	Small pussy willow, black birch, alder, western azalea and gooseberry	Flower nectar, dung and carrion
Mourning Cloak <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	June - July	Willows including black willow, weeping willow and silky willow; also American elm, cottonwood, aspen, paper birch and hackberry	Prefer tree sap, especially that of oaks; they walk down trunks to the sap and feed head downward; also feed on rotting fruit and only occasionally on flower nectar.
American Lady <i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	All Year	Plants in the sunflower family; sweet everlasting, pearly everlasting, plantain-leaved pussy toes, wormwood, ironweed and burdock	Dogbane, aster, goldenrod, marigold, selfheal, common milkweed and vetch
Painted Lady <i>Vanesse cardui</i>	May - Oct	More than 100 host plants have been noted; favorites include thistles, hollyhock, mallow and various legumes	Composites 3-6 feet high, especially thistles; also aster, Cosmos, blazing star, ironwood, and joe-pye weed; also red clover, buttonbush, privet and milkweed
Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	Oct - Mar	Plants of the nettle family including stinging nettle, tall wild nettle, wood nettle, false nettle, pellitory, mamaki and possibly hops	Sap flows on trees, fermenting fruit and bird droppings; visiting flowers only when these are not available. Then they will nectar at common milkweed, red clover, aster, and alfalfa among others.
Common Buckeye <i>Junonia coenia</i>	All Year	Plants from the snapdragon family including snapdragon and toadflax; the plantain family and the acanthus family	Composites including aster, chickory, gumweed, knapweed and tickseed sunflower; dogbane, peppermint and other flowers are also visited.
White Peacock <i>Anartia jatrophae</i>	All Year	Water hyssop	Shepherd's needle
Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i>	May - Sept	Trees in the willow family including willows, poplars and cottonwoods	Early in the season, they feed on aphid honeydew, carrion, dung and decaying fungi. Later generations feed more often at flowers, favoring composites including aster, goldenrod, joe-pye weed, shepherd's needle and Canada thistle.
Goatweed Leafwing <i>Anaea andria</i>	Winter from Aug - May Summer from July - Aug	Goatweed, Texas croton and prairie tea; all in the spurge family	Sap, rotting fruit, dung, and bird droppings
Hackberry Emperor <i>Asterocampa celtis</i>	May - Oct	Various hackleberries and sugarberries	Sap, rotting fruit, dung and carrion; will take moisture at wet spots along roads and streams
Tawny Emperor <i>Asterocampa clyton</i>	Mar - Nov	Trees of the elm family	Tree sap, rotting fruit, dung and carrion; Tawny Emperors almost never visit flowers
Southern Pearly Eye <i>Enodia portlandia</i>	Mar - Sept	Bamboo, giant cane and switch cane	Sap, rotting fruit, dung and carrion
Northern Pearly Eye <i>Enodia anhedon</i>	May - Sept	Various grasses including white grass, bearded shorthusk, plumegrass, broadleaf uniola and bottlebrush	Dung, fungi, carrion, and sap from willows, poplars and birch
Creole Pearly Eye <i>Enodia creola</i>	April - Sept	Switch cane in the grass family	Rotting fruit, sap, dung, and carrion; never flower nectar
Appalachian Brown <i>Satyroides appalachia</i>	June - Oct	Sedge and giant sedge	Sap and other non-floral resources

Gemmed Satyr <i>Cyllopsis gemma</i>	May - June	Probably bermuda grass	Not reported
Carolina Satyr <i>Hermeuptychia sosybius</i>	Feb - Sept	Carpet grass, centipede grass; probably St. Augustine grass, Kentucky bluegrass and others	Sap and rotting fruit
Georgia Satyr <i>Neonympha areolata</i>	Feb - Oct	Probably sedges	Not reported
Little Wood Satyr <i>Megisto cymela</i>	May - Aug	Orchard grass and centipede grass	Sap, aphid honeydew and rarely flower nectar
Viola's Wood Satyr <i>Megisto viola</i>	June - July	Orchard grass and centipede grass	Sap, aphid honeydew and rarely flower nectar
Common Wood Nymph <i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	May - Oct	Purpletop and other grasses	Rotting fruit, flower nectar

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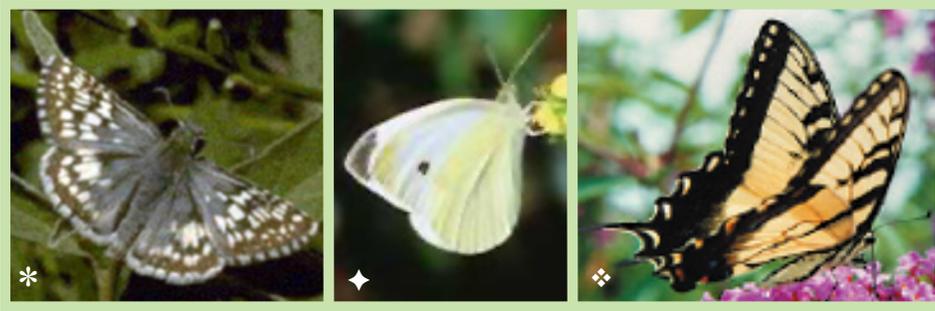
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Colorful Georgia butterflies



Common Checkered Skipper
Cabbage White
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Common Wood Nymph
Mourning Cloak
Painted Lady



Gulf Fritillary
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
(female, black form)
Gray Hairstreak



Clouded Sulphur Little
Wood-satyr
Zebra Swallowtail



Viceroy
Common Buckeye
Monarch (male)