

Unit 3 Section 1 Lesson 3: Better Homes and Gardens

Tips on Butterfly Gardening

Handout 1

1. DO NOT use insecticides and herbicides.

- Insecticides kill butterflies and caterpillars while many harmful insects quickly become immune to them.
- Herbicides kill or injure food plants for butterflies and caterpillars.

2. Plant your garden in sun.

- A sunny area facing to the south would be ideal, as it gets most of the sunlight during the day. Butterflies need sunlight to fly!

3. Research!

- Find out what butterflies are found in your area and the host plants needed for their caterpillars.
- Where is your area located? Near woodland or in full sun? What is the soil like? To determine what will thrive in your garden, make observations of the gardens in your neighborhood or in parks. Ask for advice at a local plant nursery or garden center.

4. Plant flowers rich in nectar for the butterflies.

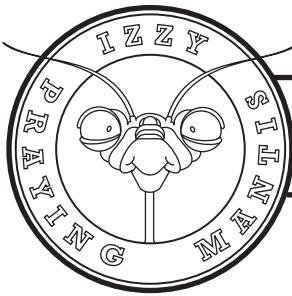
- Plant a large area of one species or one color – butterflies are attracted to quantity.
- Nectaring plants that provide cover and thus shelter for the butterflies, e.g., black-eyed Susan and butterfly bush, invite butterflies to stay longer in your garden.
- Native plants and especially wildflowers are preferred. Make sure that some butterfly favorite plants will be blooming from spring through late autumn.

5. Plant host plants for the butterfly caterpillars – OR, transform a part of your schoolyard or town property into a “no mow” area or into a meadow.

- Remember, the so-called weeds are just modest looking wildflowers. They are a sure bet, as they provide the natural food for the butterflies in your area.
- No caterpillars, no butterflies!

6. If in doubt – go natural!

- Give room to the wildflowers. Don’t forget these: milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) for caterpillars, purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) for adult butterflies.
- Butterfly feeders or butterfly houses are just expensive decorations of no real use. Butterflies do not live in a “house” like we do, they live in nature. Think in terms of plants, vines, and shrubs and you’ll also save lots of money!



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7. Provide water

- Butterflies need water for the minerals they extract from it. A small muddy and damp area is ideal, although if you have a ditch or a stream in the vicinity, you don't necessarily have to do anything.

8. Watch – DO NOT TOUCH!

- DO NOT touch or handle butterfly eggs, caterpillars, pupae, or the adult butterflies. Handling the organisms will be harmful to their well-being.
- Always remember and respect that butterflies are creatures of their own - just like we are - and they cannot be owned or controlled. Remember that is a quality only adding more to their beauty.

