



BACKYARDS  
for *Butterflies*

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE  
**BACKYARDS FOR BUTTERFLIES**

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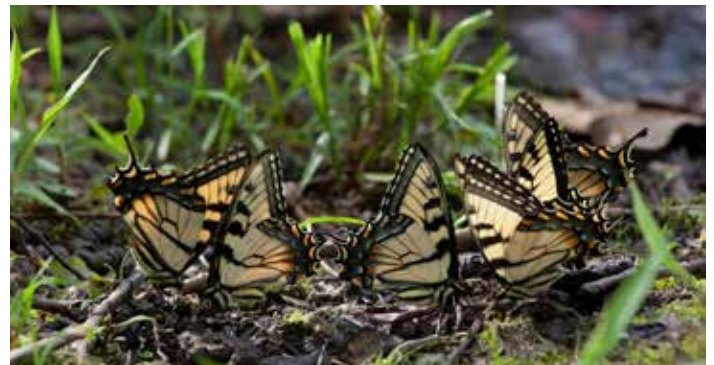
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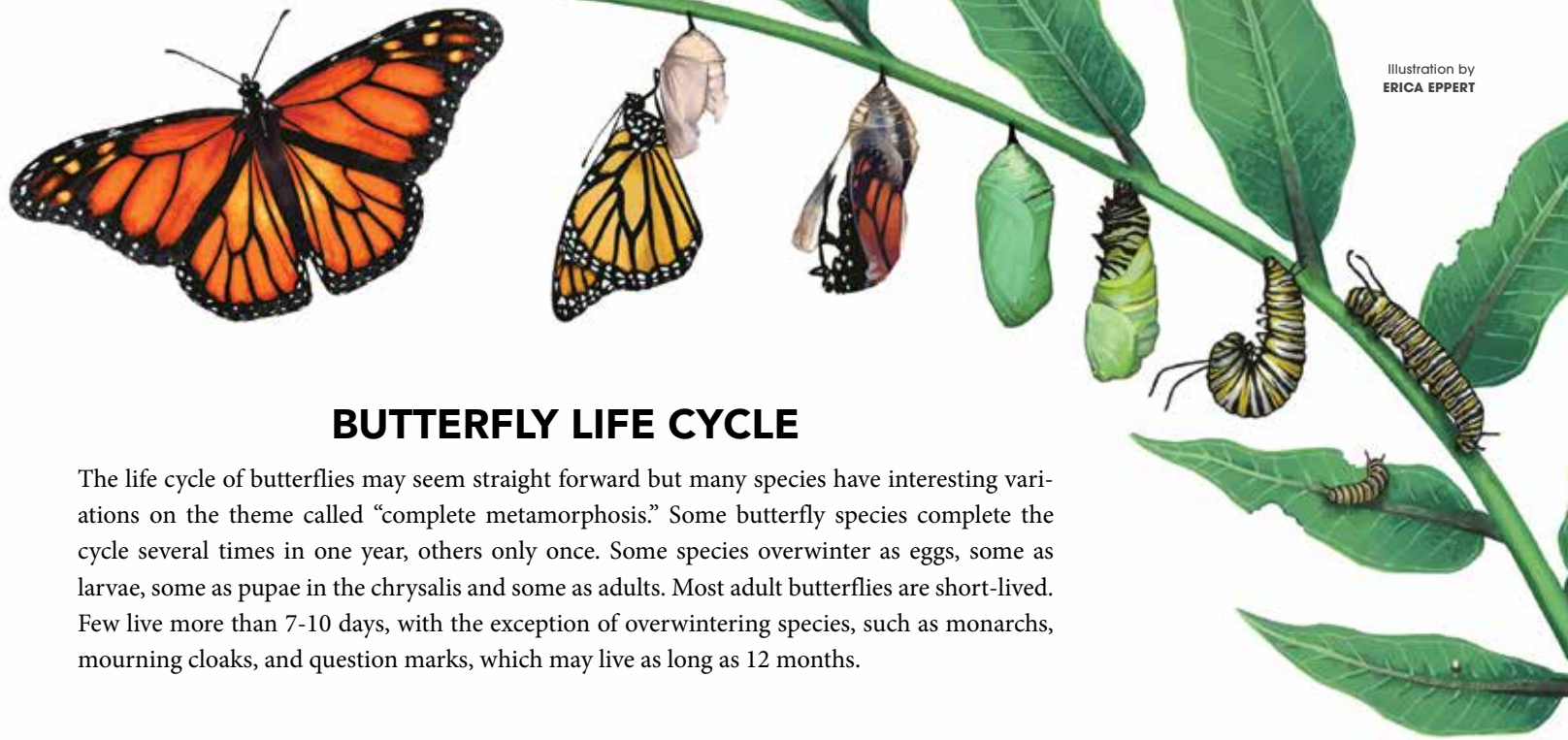
**INTRODUCTION**

More than 140 different kinds of butterflies have been recorded in Ohio. You won't find all of them in your yard, but more than two dozen species, ranging in size from the tiny blue spring azure to the magnificent monarch, can be found. If you want to attract wildlife to your property, start with butterflies! As more wildlife species that were once common are now in decline there is a greater sense of urgency for Ohioans to take action. Population declines have been seen across all different types of animals including insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. The sheer amount of habitat loss needs to be reversed. One of the best opportunities is to provide habitat in your own yard. Providing habitat for wildlife means providing water, shelter and food. It is easy to do with a few simple steps, so let's get started today and begin your journey to help conserve Ohio's wildlife.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## BUTTERFLY LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of butterflies may seem straight forward but many species have interesting variations on the theme called “complete metamorphosis.” Some butterfly species complete the cycle several times in one year, others only once. Some species overwinter as eggs, some as larvae, some as pupae in the chrysalis and some as adults. Most adult butterflies are short-lived. Few live more than 7-10 days, with the exception of overwintering species, such as monarchs, mourning cloaks, and question marks, which may live as long as 12 months.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 🦋 Provide habitat for wildlife year-round. For example, plan your garden so you have flowering plants from early spring to late fall. Consider what butterflies need to complete their entire life cycle – nectar plants, host plants, and areas for overwintering.
- 🦋 Plant native plants whenever possible. Native plants provide butterflies and their caterpillars the resources they need and when they need them. For example, don’t plant tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) which is not native to Ohio when there are many native milkweed species available.
- 🦋 Many perennial plants won’t bloom the first year. Have patience for blooms.
- 🦋 Need to start small? No effort is too small to help butterflies. Even container gardens can help provide blooms they need for nectar or host plants (food) for caterpillars.
- 🦋 Attracting pollinators to your yard will help ensure pollination for your vegetable garden.
- 🦋 Leaving the leaves on the ground and dead stems through the winter is important. Caterpillars and butterflies use these for shelter to survive the freezing temperatures
- Remove invasive plants which disrupt natural cycles and compete with native plants for resources.
- 🦋 Pesticides, an umbrella term for insecticides, herbicides and fungicides, can be in your seeds, plants or soil that you purchase. Even products labeled organic can be toxic to butterflies. Ask before you buy.
- 🦋 Make special enhancements for the butterflies you want to attract – water, feeders with rotting fruit, or wet sandy areas for puddling.
- 🦋 Expect insect damage – native plants can typically tolerate use by insects.
- 🦋 If you have a large site that you are restoring, contact the Division of Wildlife Private Lands Program at 1-800-WILDLIFE (945-3543) for guidance and resources.

## BASIC GARDENING TIPS

Planting a wide range of nectar and host plants is the best strategy for attracting a wide assortment of butterfly species. A large patch of bright colorful flowers might be appealing to butterflies, but they will linger if there are also areas that meet additional essential needs for shelter, water, and sun.

Create vital plant diversity by choosing plants of different types. Think about shrubs, trees, perennials, and even vines. Select plants that grow to different heights, with a variety of flower shapes and colors that bloom at different times (bloom periods) so there are always offerings of nectar. If the garden is small with little space for trees or shrubs, consider an arbor covered with vines to create height and interest.

Aim for basic gardening success by reading the tag that comes with the plant or ask your local nursery expert for guidance. Following plant preferences will help achieve the best results!

### ----- SUN -----

Pick the right spot. Many flowers that are attractive to butterflies and the butterflies themselves often prefer access to several hours of direct sun.

### ----- SOIL -----

Be mindful of your garden location and the soil type. Do some digging at home and check out a shovel-full of soil before shopping for plants. Some species will thrive in wet areas while others thrive in the driest of soil. Choose plants according to the characteristics of the space in which they will be growing.

### ----- SIZE -----

Carefully select the flower species according to growth. Plant flowers likely to grow the tallest in the middle or the back of the garden and the shorter, ground-covers around the edges.

### ----- SPACE -----

Try not to pack the garden too densely with flowers. Be patient. It won't be long before plants will spread and start filling in the gaps.

# GLOSSARY

**ANNUAL** - Plants with a one-year life cycle. They grow, bloom, produce seeds, and die in one year's time.

**BROOD** - A generation of butterflies that completes a whole life cycle.

**BUTTERFLY** - a nectar-feeding, diurnal insect with two pairs of large, typically brightly colored wings that are covered with microscopic scales. Distinguished from moths by having clubbed antennae, holding their wings erect when at rest.

**CATERPILLAR** - the larva of a butterfly or moth, having a segmented wormlike body with three pairs of true legs and several pairs of appendages similar to legs. Caterpillars may be hairy, have warning coloration, or be colored to resemble their surroundings.

**CHRYSALIS** - a hardened coating of protein protecting an insect pupa inside; mostly associated with butterflies

**COCOON** - a silk casing, protecting an insect pupa inside; mostly associated with moths

**DIAPAUSE** - a period of suspended development, especially during unfavorable environmental conditions

**DIURNAL** - of, relating to, or occurring during the day

**FORB** - a herbaceous flowering plant other than a grass

**FUNGICIDE** - a substance that destroys fungus (molds, yeast, mushrooms, and toadstools)

**HERBICIDE** - a substance that is toxic to plants, used to destroy unwanted vegetation

**HOST PLANT** - known as nurseries of the garden; specific plants on which caterpillars must eat

**INSECTICIDE** - a substance used for killing insects

**LARVA** - the active immature form of an insect

**LOAM** - a fertile soil with roughly equal proportions of sand, silt, and clay

**NATIVE** - plants indigenous to a given area in geologic time

**NECTAR** - a sugar-rich liquid produced by plants in glands called nectaries

**NOCTURNAL** - of, relating to, or occurring at night

**PERENNIAL** - Plants that persist for many growing seasons. Generally the top portion of the plant dies back each winter and regrows the following spring from the same root system

**PESTICIDE** - a substance used for destroying insects or other organisms

**PRUNING** - horticultural and silvicultural practice involving the selective removal of certain parts of a plant, such as branches, buds, or roots

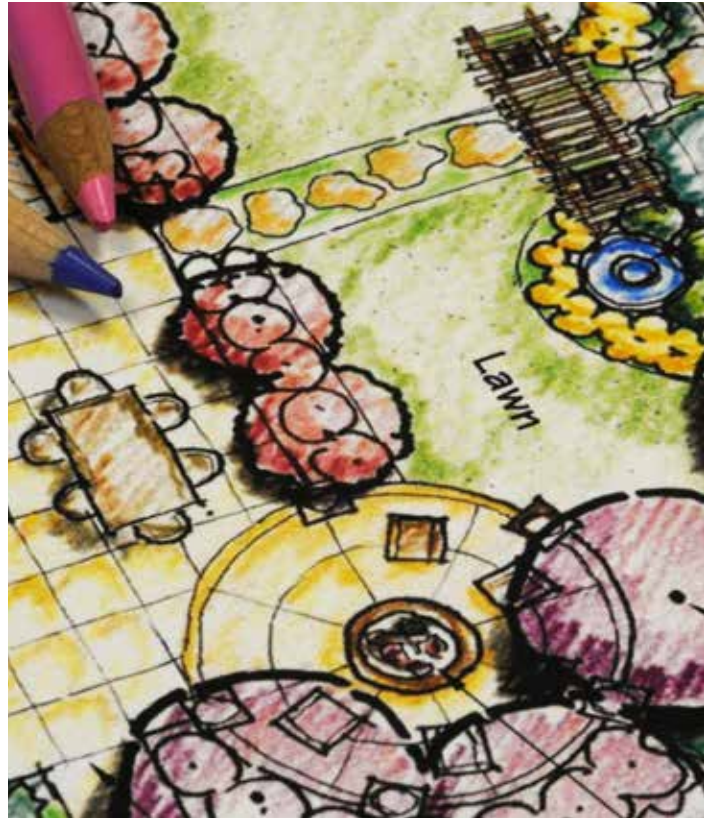
**PUPA** - the intermediate stage between the larva and adult insect

**SKIPPER** - a diurnal insect related to butterflies. Instead of knobbed antennae, the tips are usually hooked and the wing structure differs from butterflies. Flight is more erratic than most butterflies. Typically brown, tan, or yellow-orange in color.

#### GET YOUR WILDLIFE HABITAT CERTIFIED

Anyone can create a welcoming haven for local wildlife. The National Wildlife Federation is offering habitat enthusiasts the opportunity to show your commitment to wildlife. Turn your yard, balcony container garden, schoolyard, work landscape, or roadside greenspace into a Certified Wildlife Habitat® and make a lasting difference for Ohio's wildlife.

[nwf.org/garden-for-wildlife/certify](http://nwf.org/garden-for-wildlife/certify)



## GET STARTED

This guide presents a seasonal approach to building, maintaining, and enjoying a productive butterfly garden. Like all of nature, butterfly activity is influenced by the seasons, so your plans for gardening should be as well. Whether seeking host plants for egg laying, nectaring on their favorite blossoms, or finding a place to hibernate, your garden can be a haven to caterpillars and butterflies throughout the year. In the spring, gently clean up the garden while being mindful of sleeping caterpillars and the few species that have overwintered as adults. This helps promote a flurry of butterfly action as the summer sun awakens their activity levels for feeding and reproducing. The peak slowly fades into fall when some species by now have perished and others are making their flights southward to warmer climates.



# SPRING

## PLANTING, SEEDING, & MAINTENANCE

Postpone spring cleaning - delayed mowing allows grasses and forbs to mature and flower, providing much needed pollen, nectar, and seed resources to pollinators. Additionally, mature plants provide habitat needed for nesting, egg laying, and shelter. In early spring, many butterflies are still in diapause (hibernation), therefore they're basically still sleeping. Lots of beneficial insects spend the winter hunkered down in hollow plant stems either as adults or pupae. Cutting down the dead plant stems too early in the spring will disturb them before they have a chance to emerge.

When you do clean up, toss cut stems onto the compost pile or spread them near the edge of the woods. Many of the insects taking shelter inside the plant stems will still be able to emerge when the time is right. Another option is to bundle cut stems and hang them on a fence or lean them against a tree. The insects sheltering inside of them will emerge when they're ready. Bees might also use the stems as brood chambers all summer long.

## BACKYARD PROJECTS FOR SPRING

Prune with care. Some moths and butterflies spend the winter in a delicate cocoon dangling from a branch, including the swallowtails, sulfurs, and spring azures. Allow any branches with a cocoon or chrysalis present to stay intact. You can always cut them back later in the season.

### FIND A NURSERY

The Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity provides a nursery map tool to help gardeners find native plants for sale.

<http://leapbio.github.io/nurseries/>

SWALLOWTAILS ON PUCCOON  
Photo by NINA HARFMAN

## COMMON SPRING BLOOMS



### CANADA ANEMONE

*Anemone canadensis*

In only a few seasons, a few plants can quickly become a beautiful mat of white flowers. Even when not in bloom, the foliage is quite attractive. Prefers damp soil of sand, loam, or clay with full sun or partial shade. Height 1-2 feet. This plant can form dense colonies and may crowd out smaller vegetation.



### GOLDEN ALEXANDER

*Zizia aurea*

Golden Alexanders is a member of the carrot family (*Apiaceae*). Bright yellow flowers bring color in early spring and are very attractive to bees. This is an adaptable plant for average soils and moisture as well as full sun or partial shade. Height 2.5-3.5 feet.



### WILD COLUMBINE

*Aquilegia canadensis*

Blooms in a variety of colors including yellow and red. The bell-shaped flowers attract hummingbirds. Columbines will readily multiply once established. Wild columbine grows best in partial shade but can succeed in full sun or shade and is tolerant of a wide range of soils. Height 1-3 feet.



### WILD GERANIUM

*Geranium maculatum*

Blooms of pale pink, deep pink and lilac show from April through May. It attracts beneficial insects, songbirds, and butterflies. Easily grown in average or medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist soils, but tolerates poor soils. Height 1.5-2 feet.

# SUMMER

## PLANTING, SEEDING, & MAINTENANCE

One of the best things about planting native is how hands-off you can be with your garden. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions where they naturally occur so there's little need to water during the driest of conditions.

Don't be afraid to "train" plants to grow at the width and height you desire during the blooming season. Just be judicious so as not to remove too many buds/flowers at once.

Maintain an adequate supply of host plants. Caterpillars are voracious eaters. Monitor the supply of host plants in your yard and add plants as needed.

## BACKYARD PROJECTS FOR SUMMER

Create mineral sources. A small patch of wet soil will attract butterflies seeking minerals. A shallow dish with rocks or pebbles covered halfway with water will create a butterfly puddling site. During the summer, this requires some vigilance because water evaporates quickly. Pollinators will visit the dish to take in trace minerals from the water. Untreated tap water works fine here, because chlorine dissipates into the air after 24 hours. A garden pond lined with flat rocks is a permanent alternative.

### iNATURALIST

iNaturalist is a citizen science project and online social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist may be accessed via its website or from its mobile applications. Record your observations, share with fellow naturalists, and discuss your findings!

[inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org)

RED ADMIRAL ON BLAZING STAR  
Photo by M. CHUPPICH



## COMMON SUMMER BLOOMS



### BEE BALM

*Monarda didyma*

Prefers rich, humusy soils in full sun, although soil should not be allowed to dry out. Great for attracting hummingbirds! Deadhead flowers to prolong blooms. Divide clumps every 3-4 years to prevent overcrowding and to control spread. Good air circulation will help combat fungal leaf diseases. Height 2-4 feet.



### DENSE BLAZING STAR

*Liatris spicata*

Easily grown in average or medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Somewhat tolerant of poor soils, but prefers moist, fertile ones and generally performs better in moist soils than most other species of *Liatris*. Intolerant of wet soils in winter. Tolerant of summer heat and humidity. Height 2-4 feet.



### COMMON MILKWEED

*Asclepias syriaca*

A native perennial with clusters of upturned deep pink flowers. The leaves are a critical food source for monarch caterpillars and are very resistant to deer. Flowers are followed by seed pods which open and release silky-haired seeds. Grows in moist to mesic soils in full sun or partial shade. Height 2.5-5 feet.



### PURPLE CONEFLOWER

*Echinacea purpurea*

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Best in full sun. Tolerant of drought, heat, humidity and poor soil. Divide clumps every 4 years to prevent overcrowding. Plants usually rebloom without deadheading. Self-seeds if some of the seed heads are left in place. Height 2-4 feet.



COMMON BUCKEYES ON ASTER  
Photo by JOSHUA RICE

# FALL

## PLANTING, SEEDING, & MAINTENANCE

Winter habitat comes in the form of stems, leaves, and debris from your plants. You should leave these in place and try to avoid cleaning up flower beds and borders in the fall. Many native bees and butterflies overwinter on or inside the stems, and birds take shelter from harsh winter winds in the cover this debris provides. Toads nestle down in leaf debris and under loose mulch.

You may not want to display twig or stone piles right in the center of your garden, but tucking them away behind shrubs or a shed, out of sight and undisturbed, makes for a perfect insect-friendly hideaway.

Collect milkweed seeds and other native seeds. Some species need the cold temperatures of the winter months in order to germinate correctly, you can recreate this artificially by cold stratifying them in your refrigerator.

## BACKYARD PROJECTS FOR FALL

Overwintering butterflies need cover. This may already be present in the habitat or nearby. Because species may overwinter in any of the four stages, a variety of cover is needed. Butterflies overwintering in the adult stage may use the peeling bark of trees, perennial plants, old logs or fences and firewood piles. Similar sites are used by overwintering pupae. Butterflies overwintering as caterpillars or eggs use herbaceous perennials, shrubs, and trees (see the Spring project section)

## COMMON FALL BLOOMS



### WHITE WOOD ASTER

*Eurybia divaricata*

This aster of delicate, airy clouds of white daisy-like flowers forms colonies and blooms in late summer and early fall. The small, white flowers show a yellow center that fade to red atop dark green to black stems. White wood aster grows best in partial to full shade with mesic to dry soils. Height 1-3 feet.



### BLUE VERVAIN

*Verbena hastata*

Plants thrive in full or part sun in moist or wet mucky soils. It blooms from midsummer to early autumn. This plant adapts readily to degraded wetlands and other disturbed areas, but it can be found in higher quality habitats as well. Height 2-6 feet.



### LITTLE BLUE STEM

*Schizachyrium scoparium*

Little Blue Stem grass displays a blue-green color in the summer turning shades of brown, copper, and crimson that will remain all winter. It is very drought-tolerant, but can do well in mesic situations. The grass gets fluffy white seed heads. Highly deer resistant and can grow in full sun or partial shade. Height 2-4 feet.



### NATIVE ASTERS

*Symphotrichum spp.*

Most asters are late-blooming perennials that provide nectar to migrating species, like monarchs and painted ladies. For wintering species, aster nectar can help build up the stores of carbohydrates needed to survive their hibernation. Full sun and well-drained soils are ideal. Height 3-6 feet.



# WINTER

## PLANTING, SEEDING, & MAINTENANCE

Sow seeds indoors for a jump-start on spring planting.

## BACKYARD PROJECTS FOR WINTER

Plan a garden. A successful garden attractive to both humans and wildlife takes time, effort, money and maintenance. Starting with a good plan can help cut down on all of those things.

First, put your ideas on paper. Draw a map of your yard with existing trees, shrubs, slopes, patios and whatever else is established. The map can be formal (a scale version on graph paper) or a casual illustration. Make note of elements that influence the kind of plantings that will follow. Consider factors that will affect how your garden will grow such as sunlight, shade, wind, drainage, access to water, and recreational activity on your property. There are templates and programs online to help with garden design.

Next, choose your plants with guidance from your map and this publication. Budget, ease of care, compatibility with neighboring plants, aesthetics and size all come into play in garden design. A tricky part of native plant gardening is acquiring plants. Research online and local nurseries inquiring about where to obtain the species that interest you. Mail ordering plants and seeds is an option worth considering.

Once you have your map completed and your plants selected, it will soon be spring and time to get your hands dirty! Remember to start small and grow from there! Gardening for butterflies should be looked at as a marathon, not a sprint. Have fun and ease into it! As any experienced green thumb will tell you, there's always room for improvement and new ideas.

## COMMON WINTER BLOOMS



### COMMON WITCH-HAZEL

*Hamamelis virginiana*

Yellow, strap-like flowers of this shrub are among the last blooms to appear in the fall. The large, rounded, dark green leaves often hang onto the winter branches. The fruit capsules mature a year after flowering, splitting open to expel seeds. Tolerant of road salt and clay soil and can grow in partial shade. Height 10-15 feet.



### COMMON NINEBARK

*Physocarpus opulifolius*

A cold-hardy, native shrub. Pinkish-white flower clusters in late spring turn into persistent seed capsules and exfoliating bark adds to the season. Papery seed capsules that stay long into the season attract seed-eating birds. This versatile plant can be grown in all soil types with full sun or partial shade. Height 3-10 feet.



### SHAGBARK HICKORY

*Carya ovata*

This open landscape tree is named for its peeling bark giving the tree a shaggy appearance. Hickory leaves are known to support up to 200 different species of caterpillars. Tolerates dry sites and occasional flooding but prefers moist, well-drained soil. Full or partial sun preferred. Height up to 80 feet.



### COMMON WINTERBERRY

*Ilex verticillata*

This easy-growing shrub grows well in wet or dry sites and with full sun or partial shade. The flowers are attractive to butterflies in summer and the berries are attractive to birds in winter. Both male and female plants are required to produce the berries. Height 3- 12 feet.

# NECTAR PLANTS



**CULVER'S ROOT**

*Veronicastrum virginicum*

**Sun:** Full

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late

**Soil:** Moist-Mesic

**Height:** 48-60 inches



**JOE PYE WEED**

*Eutrochium purpureum*

**Sun:** Full

**Bloom Period:** Mid

**Soil:** Average

**Height:** 48-60 inches



**GOLDENROD**

*Solidago spp.*

**Sun:** Full

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late

**Soil:** Average

**Height:** 30-48 inches



**CHOCKECHERRY**

*Prunus virginiana*

**Sun:** Partial

**Bloom Period:** Early

**Soil:** Dry acidic

**Height:** 20-30 feet



**SPIDERWORT**

*Tradescantia spp.*

**Sun:** Partial

**Bloom Period:** Early-Mid

**Soil:** Average

**Height:** 24-36 inches



**PURPLE CONEFLOWER**

*Echinacea*

**Sun:** Partial

**Bloom Period:** Mid

**Soil:** Average

**Height:** 10-20 inches



**INDIGO**

*Baptisia spp.*

**Sun:** Full

**Bloom Period:** Early

**Soil:** Average

**Height:** 24-60 inches



**CARDINAL FLOWER**

*Lobelia cardinalis*

**Sun:** Partial

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late

**Soil:** Wet

**Height:** 30-36 inches



**CUP PLANT**

*Silphium perfoliatum*

**Sun:** Full

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late

**Soil:** Moist

**Height:** 72-96 inches



### LUPINE

*Lupinus spp.*

**Sun:** Full  
**Soil:** Dry acidic

**Bloom Period:** Early  
**Height:** 8-24 inches



### IRONWEED

*Vernonia spp.*

**Sun:** Full  
**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late  
**Height:** 48-60 inches



### LANCELEAF COREOPSIS

*Coreopsis lanceolata*

**Sun:** Partial  
**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Mid  
**Height:** 24-48 inches



### PHLOX

*Phlox spp.*

**Sun:** Partial  
**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Early  
**Height:** 10-20 inches



### BEEBALMS/BERGAMOT

*Monarda spp.*

**Sun:** Partial  
**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Mid  
**Height:** 30-48 inches



### COMMON BONESET

*Eupatorium perfoliatum*

**Sun:** Full  
**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Mid  
**Height:** 48-60 inches



### RATTLESNAKE MASTER

*Eryngium yuccifolium*

**Sun:** Partial  
**Soil:** Dry

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late  
**Height:** 24-36 inches



### OBEDIENT PLANT

*Physostegia virginiana*

**Sun:** Partial  
**Soil:** Moist

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late  
**Height:** 30-45 inches



### BLAZING STARS

*Liatris spp.*

**Sun:** Full  
**Soil:** Dry

**Bloom Period:** Mid-Late  
**Height:** 18-48 inches

# EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL

*PAPILIO GLAUCUS*



Photo by NINA HARFMANN

The Eastern tiger swallowtail is the most common swallowtail butterfly in Ohio. They love to siphon mineral salts from mud puddles forming “puddle clubs.”

Like most swallowtails they are very strong fliers.

**HOST PLANTS:** a variety of woody plants, including sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), various ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). Trees and shrubs are important species, but keep in mind that they take up more space than typical garden plants.

**WINGSPAN:** 3.5 inches to 5.5 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



**SASSAFRAS** *Sassafras albidum*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**SOIL:** Average

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 30-60 feet



# SPICEBUSH SWALLOWTAIL

*PAPILIO TROILUS*



Photo by FRODE JACOBSEN

Spicebush swallowtails reach peak abundance in large forests of southern Ohio, where it can be numerous. There are normally two broods, in spring and late summer. Because hatches of each brood extend over several weeks, this species can be found from early spring into late fall. The caterpillar is an exceptional example of deceptive camouflage. It appears to have a fearsome snake-like face, which presumably can frighten off potential predators.

**HOST PLANTS:** spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and members of the laurel family (*Lauraceae*).

**WINGSPAN:** 3.5 inches to 5.5 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



**SPICEBUSH** *Lindera benzoin*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**SOIL:** Average

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 6-12 feet

# GIANT SWALLOWTAIL

*PAPILIO CRESPHONTES*

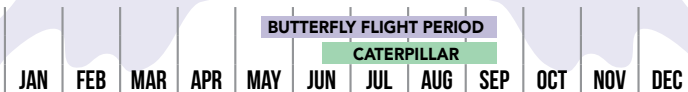


Photo by KEVIN COLLISON

Numbers are cyclical from year to year, but even in boom years this is Ohio's least common swallowtail. They are usually observed in close proximity to host plant populations. Giant swallowtails are one of the largest butterflies in North America. They are swift, powerful flyers and can quickly vanish to the tree canopy if disturbed.

**HOST PLANTS:** members of the citrus family (*Rutaceae*). There are only two species in Ohio, prickly-ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) and wafer-ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*). Neither species is widely abundant and they tend to form localized colonies. Both plants are more frequent in western Ohio and so is this swallowtail.

**WINGSPAN:** 4.5 inches to 5.5 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by MARINO DENISENKO

**PRICKLY-ASH** *Zanthoxylum americanum*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**SOIL:** Dry

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 15-20 feet

# BLACK SWALLOWTAIL

*PAPILIO POLYXENES*



Photo by PAUL REEVES

The larvae of black swallowtails are attracted to the oils of plants such as dill, parsley, celery, and carrots. These plants produce specific chemicals that repel insects that try to eat them. Black swallowtail larvae are resistant to these chemicals, so when they feed on the plants, the chemicals make them bad-tasting to bird predators.

**HOST PLANTS:** native and non-native species in the parsley family (*Apiaceae*). Ohio host plants include Honewort (*Cryptotaenia canadensis*) and garden herbs like fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and dill (*Anethum graveolens*). These non-native species are not considered invasive and will not compete with other garden plants.

**WINGSPAN:** 2.5 inches to 4.2 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by GERRY BISHOP

### GOLD ALEXANDERS *Zizia aurea*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**SOIL:** Wet

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 1-2 feet

# PEARL CRESCENT

*PHYCIODES THAROS*

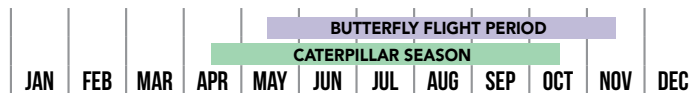


Photo by DAVID BYRON KEENER

Pearl crescents have three to four broods a year, so you can find butterflies on the wing on almost any field outing during the season. They are particularly frequent in old fields with an abundance of asters, and you can occasionally find them gathered in large numbers at a puddle or water source. Like some butterfly species, males are aggressive, darting out to investigate other butterflies and even insects. Pearl crescents overwinter in the larval stage.

**HOST PLANTS:** many species of Aster, pearl crescents are thought to use the subgenus *Euaster* in particular which includes twenty-two of Ohio's thirty-five aster species.

**WINGSPAN:** 1.25 inches to 1.6 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by BILDAGENTUR ZONAR GMBH

**NEW ENGLAND ASTER** *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*

\*Asters are also beneficial nectar plants

**SUN:** Partial

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**SOIL:** Dry

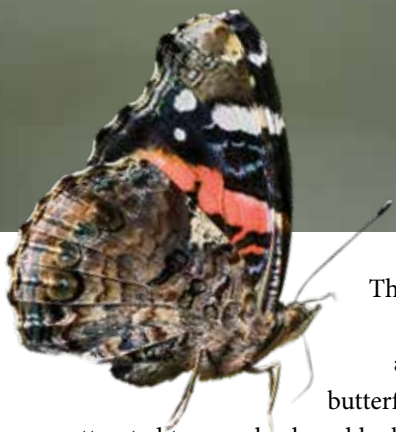
**HEIGHT:** 24-60 inches

# RED ADMIRAL

*VANESSA ATALANTA*



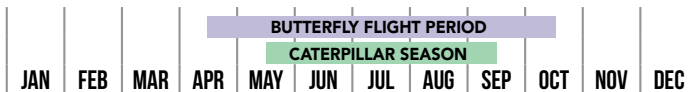
Photo by NINA HARFMANN



This species nectars on many flowers and is attracted to mud puddles and animal scat. Most brushfooted butterflies such as the red admiral can be attracted to your backyard by baiting with rotten fruit. It is a fast and erratic flier.

**HOST PLANTS:** wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Pennsylvania pellitory (*Parietaria pensylvanica*). While nettles aren't a popular choice for gardeners, they are essential for this species. Consider allowing them to grow if they are naturally found on your property.

**WINGSPAN:** 1.75 inches to 2.5 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by MANFRED RUCKSZIO

**NETTLES** *Urtica dioica*

**SUN:** Full  
**SOIL:** Average

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid  
**HEIGHT:** 18-24 inches

# QUESTION MARK

*POLYGONIA INTERROGATIONIS*



Photo by LEENA ROBINSON

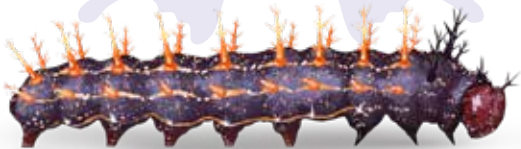


Hibernators such as the question mark, comma, and mourning cloak are some of the longest lived butterflies in Ohio.

They can often be seen on sunny, warm, winter days or early spring days. The fall adults hibernate over winter in hollow logs, and in earthen crevices. The males are attracted to mud puddles, tree sap, rotten fruit, animal scat, and carrion.

**HOST PLANTS:** Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), red elm (*Ulmus rubra*), stinging nettle (*Urtica procera*), and false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*).

**WINGSPAN:** 2.25 inches to 3 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



**COMMON HACKBERRY** *Celtis occidentalis*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**SOIL:** Average

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 40-60 feet



# AMERICAN LADY

*VANESSA VIRGINIENSIS*



The ornate inscriptions on the underwing surfaces of this common butterfly are quite striking, as if an abstract artist used the wings as a canvas.

It was once known as the American beauty. This somewhat wary species is best approached when nectaring at a favored flower. This species is first seen on the wing in the early spring, but is more common in June. There are two to three broods per year.

**HOST PLANTS:** Plantain-leaved pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), fragrant cudweed (*Gnaphalium obtusifolium*), and burdock (*Arctium* species).

**WINGSPAN:** 1.75 inches to 2.4 inches

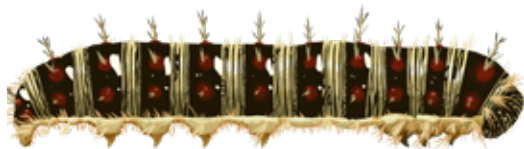


Photo by ELIZABETH SPENCER

## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by FRITZ FLOHR REYNOLDS

**PUSSYTOES** *Antennaria plantaginifolia*

**SUN:** Full

**SOIL:** Dry

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**HEIGHT:** 6-12 inches



# MONARCH

*DANAUS PLEXIPPUS*



Monarch butterflies are the longest-lived butterfly found in Ohio, with some adults surviving more than ten months. Most monarchs produced in Ohio make an incredible fall migration to high elevation fir forests in Mexico. After overwintering there, they return north in increments, stopping along the way to lay eggs and thus recolonize the southern states. It is the offspring of this first spring brood, and even second or third broods, that returns to Ohio.

**HOST PLANTS:** up to 13 species of milkweed found in Ohio including common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), and butterfly-weed (*A. tuberosa*).

**WINGSPAN:** 3.5 inches to 4 inches

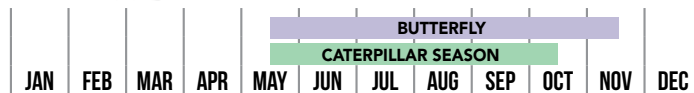


Photo by NINA WARFMAN

## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by NANCY J. ONDRA

### SWAMP MILKWEED *Asclepias incarnata*

\*Milkweeds are also beneficial nectar plants

**SUN:** Full to partial

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**SOIL:** Average to moist

**HEIGHT:** 48-72 inches



# GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY

*SPEYERIA CYBELE*



Photo by KENNETH KEIFER



This is a large butterfly with a strong flight. They frequently stop at flowers, especially milkweeds. Males often gather at mud puddles and animal scat, taking in mineral salts and proteins. Females are larger and darker than males, and do not appear until later in the summer when they lay eggs near host plants – but often not on the plants. Newly hatched larvae overwinter without feeding. In spring, they must make their way to the hosts, upon which they only feed at night.

**HOST PLANTS:** violets (*Viola spp.*), likely many of the twenty-six native species known to Ohio.

**WINGSPAN:** 2.9 inches to 3.8 inches



## HOST PLANT PROFILE



Photo by MELINDA FAWVER

### COMMON BLUE VIOLET *Viola sororia*

**SUN:** Full to partial

**BLOOM PERIOD:** Mid

**SOIL:** Average to moist

**HEIGHT:** 4-6 inches



ENODIA ANTHEDON

Photo by TIM DANIEL

## NORTHERN PEARLY EYE

Northern pearly-eyes get their name from the ringed eye-spots on the ventral hindwing. It is one of the few Ohio butterflies that strictly inhabits deep, shady wooded habitats. Their dark coloration and striped and spotted wing pattern allow them to blend well with their surroundings. When disturbed, they shoot off in an erratic flight that is hard to follow among the trees and dappled sunlight of the forest. This species rarely visits flowers as they typically visit tree sap, rotting fruit, and animal remains.

A number of species of grasses, especially bottlebrush grass (*Elymus hystrix*), river oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), longawned wood grass (*Brachyelytrum erectum*), and white grass (*Leersia virginica*).



### HOST PLANT PROFILE

#### BOTTLEBRUSH GRASS

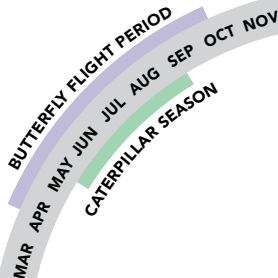
*Elymus hystrix*

**Sun:** Full to partial

**Soil:** Average to dry

**Bloom Period:** Late

**Height:** 24-36 inches



EPARGYREUS CLARUS

## SILVER-SPOTTED SKIPPER

If only all of our skippers were so easy to identify! Big, bold, and distinctively marked, the common and wide-ranging silver-spotted skipper is far more conspicuous than most of the other skipper species found in Ohio. It, like almost all of Ohio's skippers, has a curved tip to its antennae called an apiculus. Silver-spotteds have a strong and fast flight pattern. They can be hard to follow, but often stop to take nectar at flowers of milkweeds, thistles and other blooming plants.

**HOST PLANTS:** various species in the pea family (*Fabaceae*), including partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and honey-locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*).



### HOST PLANT PROFILE

#### PARTRIDGE PEA

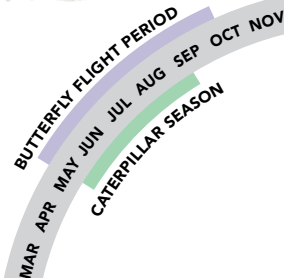
*Chamaecrista fasciculata*

**Sun:** Full

**Soil:** Average to dry

**Bloom Period:** Mid

**Height:** 12-36 inches





**CELASTRINA LADON/  
CELASTRINA NEGLECTA**

Photo by JOHANN VILORIA



**AGLAIS MILBERTI**

Photo by FRODE JACOBSEN

## SPRING & SUMMER AZURE

These species are extremely similar and until recently were considered to be different forms of the same species. Both are very common in Ohio and sometimes form huge “puddle clubs” at favored muddy spots. The spring azure is one of the first non-hibernating butterflies to appear each spring. Occasionally, it can be found near the Ohio River as early as mid-March.

**HOST PLANTS:** black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and a variety of other woody plants. Summer azures use wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*).



### HOST PLANT PROFILE

#### BLACK CHERRY

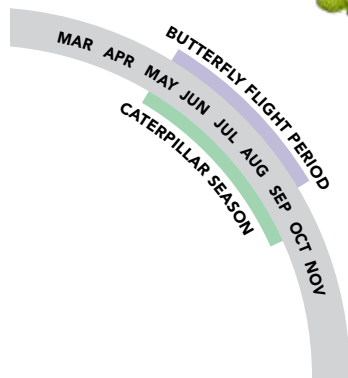
*Prunus serotina*

**Sun:** Full to partial

**Soil:** Average

**Bloom Period:** Mid

**Height:** 50-80 feet



### HOST PLANT PROFILE

#### STINGING NETTLE

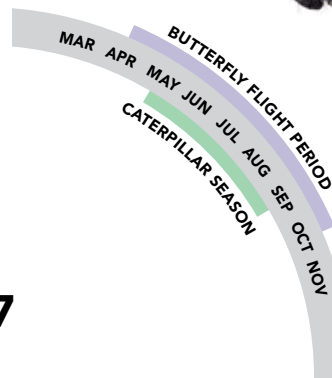
*Urtica dioica*

**Sun:** Full to partial

**Soil:** Average-moist

**Bloom Period:** Mid

**Height:** 3-7 feet







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 **Ohio Pollinator  
Habitat Initiative**

## MISSION STATEMENT

*To conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.*

The ODNR Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for managing Ohio's fish and wildlife resources. The primary source of funding for the division comes from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, federal excise taxes on hunting, fishing, and shooting equipment, and donations from the public. We care about all wildlife and maintaining stable, healthy wildlife populations. Our challenge is to balance the needs of wildlife, habitat, and people.