

Native Plants for Butterfly Gardening

in the Southern Willamette Valley, Oregon

B. Newhouse 2001/2004

You have probably read about planting flowers for butterflies, but much of the published information doesn't help you provide the best habitat for our local butterflies. Nearly all plants that are promoted as butterfly plants focus on attracting adult butterflies to nectar. They don't help you provide food for the entire life cycle of butterflies and aren't necessarily suited for our local conditions or our local butterfly species.

Why Garden with Native Plants for Butterflies?

Native butterflies and native plants evolve together. This strong relationship is particularly important for butterfly caterpillars and their host (food) plants. Some butterfly species will use only a single native plant species (or closely-related group of species) as a host and won't use plants brought in from other places. Also, native plants also benefit a variety of native insects and birds, and they are easy to care for because they are well-adapted to our climate. Please be aware that some non-native plants promoted for butterfly gardening can even be harmful to butterflies and the environment. Butterfly Bush, in particular, is a nectar plant that is beginning to escape along our local streams and crowd out native willows -- which are choice butterfly host plants! And the common garden violet can be fatal to fritillary caterpillars if eaten. Ouch!!

Some Tips for Butterfly Gardening with Native Plants

- 1. KNOW YOUR SITE: and match the plant to your site conditions.** Plants each have their own needs for sun, water and soil type. Evaluate your yard or garden to determine which plants would do best. More information on propagation and requirements of native plants can be found on the NPSO Emerald Chapter web site (EmeraldNPSO.org), and in *Bringing Nature Home* (D. Tallamy), *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest* (A. R. Kruckeberg), and *Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants* (R. Rose, E. C. Chachulski, and D. L. Haase). Be aware that these books cover plants from several ecoregions and do not have the critical *local* orientation for best native plant selection!
- 2. THINK LOCAL: Insist on plant stock propagated locally to preserve local genetics.** Importing plants from out of the local area can affect our local plants in the wild, and cause loss of local unique colors and other features, and can adversely affect the flowering times of our local populations -- and that could affect butterflies! Try to get seed or plant stock *originating* from within 20 miles of your garden site. If not, from farther is OK, but the bottom line should be that the plant's origins must be from within the Willamette Valley. This is important so that local plants aren't harmed by hybridizing with plants that evolved in other areas under different conditions, and that may differ genetically.
- 3. BE PATIENT: some native plant species will be hard to find.** The plants listed in this handout are sometimes available at local nurseries that carry native plants, but you may have to work a bit harder for others. Don't despair, take your time - it will be worth it! More people asking for local native plants will give nurseries incentive to stock them. Some species can be found through your local chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, and our local NABA chapter may also get involved in propagating species for members which are not available in nurseries. Alternatively, professional botanists can help find and collect seed, and professional growers can be contracted to grow them out for best success. This is not cheap, but can be very effective and accomplishes #1 and #2 above.

Top Willamette Valley Host Plants and the Butterflies Who Love Them

PLANTS		Common WV butterfly species or groups that use as host	
Common Name	Latin Name	Documented	Suspected
nettles, stinging	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Red Admiral, Painted Lady, W. Coast Painted Lady, Satyr Comma	Green Comma
cherry, choke	<i>Prunus virginiana</i> var. <i>demissa</i>	W. Tiger Swallowtails, Lorquin's Admiral, Spring Azure	Painted Lady
lupine, many-leaved	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	Painted Lady, W. Tailed-Blue, Silvery Blue	Clouded Sulphur, W. Coast Painted Lady, Gray Hairstreak, Silvery Blue, Fender's Blue, Acmon Blue, Silver-Spotted Skipper
vetch, American	<i>Vicia americana</i>	Orange Sulphur, Clouded Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, W. Tailed-Blue	Silvery Blue
oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	Lorquin's Admiral, Spring Azure	---
willow, Scouler's	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	W. Tiger Swallowtail	Lorquin's Admiral
yellow monkeyflower	<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>	Mylitta Crescent	"Chalcedon" Variable Checkerspot
cress, American winter	<i>Barbarea orthoceras</i>	Sara Orangetip, Mustard White	---
violet, early blue	<i>Viola adunca</i> var. <i>adunca</i>	Great Spangled Fritillary, other fritillaries	---
mugwort	<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>	Painted Lady, American Painted Lady	W. Coast Lady
oak, Oregon white	<i>Quercus garryana</i>	Propertius Duskywing	Lorquin's Admiral, California Sister, Gray Hairstreak, Spring Azure
everlasting, pearly	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	Painted Lady, American Painted Lady	W. Coast Painted Lady
violet, stream	<i>Viola glabella</i>	---	Great Spangled Fritillary
maple, bigleaf	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	W. Tiger Swallowtail	Mourning Cloak, Silvery Blue
milkweed, showy	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	Monarch	Gray Hairstreak
yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Painted Lady	Purplish Copper
heart, bleeding	<i>Dicentra formosa</i>	Clodius Parnassian	-
lomatium, fernleaf	<i>Lomatium dissectum</i>	Anise Swallowtail	-
cinquefoil, slender	<i>Potentilla gracilis</i>	-	Purplish Copper
checkermallow, meadow	<i>Sidalcea campestris</i>	-	W. Coast Painted Lady, Common Checkered Skipper
checkermallow, rosy	<i>Sidalcea virgata</i>	-	W. Coast Painted Lady, Common Checkered Skipper
strawberry, broadpetal	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i> var. <i>platyphylla</i>	Painted Lady	Gray Hairstreak
Nootka rose	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	"Chalcedon" Variable Checkerspot	Gray Hairstreak

Native grasses used by skippers & common wood nymph: blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), California fescue (*Festuca californica*), California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), etc.

WILLAMETTE VALLEY NATIVE HOST PLANTS FOR BUTTERFLIES

B. Newhouse 2004

Selection criteria: **appropriateness** for growth on valley floor or adjacent hillsides, **use** by common butterfly species, **practicality** for use in gardening, and **feasibility** of obtaining and growing. Try to obtain stock collected/propagated **LOCALLY** to protect local genetic diversity.

KEY: **S** **Stature:** T = tree; S = shrub; H = herb
Light **SN** = sun; **PS** = part shade; **SH** = shade
Moisture **W** = wet; **A** = average; **D** = dry
Available? **N** = nurseries; **C** = cuttings; **S** = seed collect by botanists or NPSO (NABA project?)

TABLE 1. PLANT INFORMATION			Light			Moisture			Comments	Available?
S	Common Name	Latin Name	SN	PS	SH	W	A	D		
T	alder, red	<i>Alnus rubra</i>							Vigorous. Prefers to be near stream.	N; C
S	ceanothus, Redstem	<i>Ceanothus sanguineus</i>							Beautiful red stems, white flower clusters.	N? C?
H	checkermallow, Cusick's	<i>Sidalcea cusickii</i>							Sim. to meadow checkermallow; darker pink, moister site.	N; S
H	checkermallow, meadow	<i>Sidalcea campestris</i>							Tall, with light pink spikes of flowers.	N; S
H	checkermallow, rosy	<i>Sidalcea virgata</i>							Similar to meadow checkermallow, but shorter.	N; S
S	cherry, choke-	<i>Prunus virginiana</i> var. <i>demissa</i>							Also a good bird food plant.	N
H	cinquefoil, slender	<i>Potentilla gracilis</i>							Can handle slightly moist areas; bright yellow flowers	S
H	everlasting, pearly	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>							Also a good nectar plant.	N; S
H	heart, bleeding	<i>Dicentra formosa</i>							Prefers moist. Sole host plant for clodius parnassian.	N
H	lomatium, fernleaf	<i>Lomatium dissectum</i>							Finely divided leaves, small flowers.	S
H	lupine, many-leaved	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>							Or streambank lupine (<i>L. rivularis</i>), for dry habitat, sun.	N; S
H	lupine, streambank	<i>Lupinus rivularis</i>							Short-lived perennial.	S
T	maple, bigleaf	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>							Fast growing.	N; S
H	milkweed, showy	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>							Also a good nectar plant; forms patches.	N; S
H	monkey flower, yellow	<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>							Likes low, damp ditches; OK with flower bed irrigation.	S
H	mugwort	<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>							Forms 4' tall patches; flowers small, leaves w/silvery cast.	S
H	nettles, stinging	<i>Urtica dioica</i>							Not good near small children; best in "back corner"	S
T	oak, California black	<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>							Eugene is north end of this species range.	N?
T	oak, Oregon white	<i>Quercus garryana</i>							May grow 2 feet/year; oak mistletoe also a host plant!	N
S	oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>							Forms dense shrub also revered by birds.	N
S	rose, Nootka	<i>Rosa nutkana</i> var. <i>nutkana</i>							Prefers slightly moist.	N
H	strawberry, broadpetal	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i> var. <i>platyphylla</i>							Makes handsome ground cover.	N; S
H	vetch, American	<i>Vicia americana</i>							Somewhat sprawling, not erect.	S
H	violet, early blue	<i>Viola adunca</i> var. <i>adunca</i>							Becoming rare in our area. Avoid non-local seed.	N;
H	violet, stream	<i>Viola glabella</i>							Often likes slightly moister than average.	N; S
T	willow, Scouler's	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>							Small tree; upland substitute for wetland willows.	C
H	wintercress, American	<i>Barbarea orthoceras</i>							Not much known about cultivation.	S
H	yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>							White flowers; also a good nectar plant.	S

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Timing: **E** = early (April-May), **M** = mid (May-July), **L** = late (July-September); **Available?** **N** = nurseries, **C** = cuttings possible;
S = seed collect by botanists or NPSO (NABA project?) **Host?** **D** = documented host plant, **S** = suspected host plant.

S	Common Name	Latin Name	Light			Moisture			Timing	Available ?	Host ?	Comments
			SN	PS	SH	W	A	D				
H	aster, Douglas'	<i>Aster subspicatus</i>							M-L	S	S	Showy
H	checkermallow, meadow	<i>Sidalcea campestris</i>							M	N; S	D	Showy
H	checkermallow, Cusick's	<i>Sidalcea cusickii</i>							M	N; S	D	Showy
H	checkermallow, rosy	<i>Sidalcea virgata</i>							M	N; S	D	Showy
S	cherry, choke-	<i>Prunus virginiana var. demissa</i>							M	N; C	D	
H	cress, American winter	<i>Barbarea orthoceras</i>							E-M	S	D	Showy
H	everlasting, pearly	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>							M-L	N; S	D	
H	fireweed	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>							M-L	N; S		
H	geranium, Oregon	<i>Geranium oregonum</i>							M	S		
H	goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>							L	N; S		Showy
H	lily, cat's ear	<i>Calochortus tolmiei</i>							E-M	S		
H	lily, tiger	<i>Lilium columbianum</i>							M	N; S		Showy
H	lomatum, common	<i>Lomatium utriculatum</i>							M	S	D	Delicate, lacy leaf
H	lomatum, fernleaf	<i>Lomatium dissectum</i>							M	S	D	Delicate, lacy leaf
H	lupine, many-leaved	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>							M	N; S	D	Showy
H	lupine, riverbank	<i>Lupinus rivularis</i>							M	S	S	Showy
H	madia, showy	<i>Madia elegans</i>							M-L	S		Showy
H	milkweed, showy	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>							M-L	N; S	D	Showy
S	mock-orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>							M	N; S		
H	mugwort	<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>							M	N; S	D	
H	mule's-ears	<i>Wyethia angustifolia</i>							M	N; S	S	Showy
S	oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>							M	N; C	D	
H	parsnip, cow	<i>Heracleum lanatum</i>							M	S	D	
H	poppy, California	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>							M	S		Find local stock.
S	rose, Nootka	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>							M	N; C	S	
H	strawberry, broadpetal	<i>Fragaria virginiana var. platypetala</i>							M	S	S	
H	sunshine, Oregon	<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>							M	S		
H	thistle, short-styled	<i>Cirsium brevistylum</i>							M	S	S	May look "weedy"
H	vetch, American	<i>Vicia americana</i>							M	S	S	Hard to find
S-T	willow, Scouler's	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>							E	C	S	
H	yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>							M	S	D	