

Butterfly Plants

This list was compiled from three sources:

Butterflies of Michigan, by Jaret C. Daniels

Michigan Butterflies & Skippers: A Field Guide and Reference, by Mogens C. Nielsen MSU Extension

Learn about Butterflies in the Garden, by Brenda Dziedzic

This list was reviewed and revised by Brenda Dziedzic, author of Learn about Butterflies in the Garden

Butterflies and skippers require both a host plant for the larvae to feed on and a place for adults to nectar. While these insects do not have a great deal of host specificity with respect to nectaring sources, they generally do with respect to larval host plants. Sometimes the larval host plant is limited to one specific species. For example, the Karner Blue requires Lupine as it's larval host. Other butterflies like the Monarch can rear it's young on all the native milkweed (*Asclepias*) species found in Michigan. Other butterfly species like the Summer Azure can use an even broader range of species.

Species indicated below are plants we commonly grow and sell at Wildtype

Plants that serve as larval hosts for butterflies and skippers:

Scientific Names (Plants)	Common Names (Plants)	Common Name (Butterflies)
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	Serviceberry	Striped Hairstreak
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Leadplant	Southern Dogface, Northern Cloudywing
<i>Amphicarpaea bracteata</i>	Hog-Peanut	Northern Cloudywing
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	Pearly Everlasting	American Lady
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem	Cobweb Skipper, Dusted Skipper
<i>Angelica atropurpurea</i>	Angelica	Black Swallowtail
<i>Antennaria</i> spp.	Pussytoes	American Lady
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Columbine	Columbine Duskywing
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry	Brown Elfin, Hoary Elfin
<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Virginia Snakeroot	Pipevine Swallowtail
<i>Asclepias</i> spp.	Various Milkweeds	Monarch
<i>Asimina triloba</i>	Pawpaw	Zebra Swallowtail
<i>Aster</i> spp.	Asters	Pearl Crescent, Silvery Checkerspot, Gorgone Checkerspot, Northern Crescent
<i>Aster umbellatus</i>	Flat-Topped White Aster	Harris's Checkerspot
<i>Baptisia tinctoria</i>	Wild Indigo	Wild Indigo Duskywing, Hoary Edge, Frosted Elfin
<i>Betula</i> spp.	Birch	Mourning Cloak, Compton Tortoiseshell, White Admiral, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Dreamy Duskywing
<i>Carex lacustris</i>	Sedge	Appalachian Eyed Brown
<i>Carex</i> spp.	Sedges	Eyed Brown, Chryus Arctic, Appalachian Brown, Black Dash, Dion Skipper, Broad Winged Skipper, Mulberry Wing, Dun Skipper

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<i>Carya</i> spp.	Hickory	Banded Hairstreak, Hickory Hairstreak
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey Tea	Summer Azure, Mottled Duskywing
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Hackberry	Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, Question Mark, Mourning Cloak, American Snout
<i>Celtis tenuifolia</i>	Dwarf Hackberry	Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, Question Mark, Mourning Cloak, American Snout
<i>Chamaedaphne calyculata</i>	Leatherleaf	Brown Elfin
<i>Chelone glabra</i>	Turtlehead	Baltimore Checkerspot
<i>Cirsium muticum</i>	Swamp Thistle	Swamp Metalmark, Painted Lady
<i>Cirsium</i> spp.	Thistle	Painted Lady
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	Spring Azure, Summer Azure
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray Dogwood	Spring Azure, Summer Azure
<i>Cornus</i> spp.	Dogwoods	Spring Azure, Summer Azure
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Hawthorn	Striped Hairstreak
<i>Desmodium canadense</i>	Showy Tick Trefoil	Eastern Tailed-Blue
<i>Eleocharis elliptica</i>	Golden-Seeded Spike Rush	Poweshiek Skipperling
<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	Bottlebrush Grass	Northern Pearly Eye, Little Wood Satyr
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Wild Strawberry	Grizzled Skipper
<i>Gerardia</i> spp.	False Foxglove	Baltimore Checkerspot
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Honey Locust	Silver-spotted Skipper
<i>Glyceria striata</i>	Graceful Grass	Pepper and Salt Skipper, Appalachian Brown
<i>Gnaphalium obtusifolium</i>	Sweet Everlasting	American Lady
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Sneezeweed	Silvery Checkerspot
<i>Helianthus</i> spp.	Sunflowers	Silvery Checkerspot, Gorgone Checkerspot
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Butternut	Banded Hairstreak, Hickory Hairstreak
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut	Banded Hairstreak
<i>Kalmia angustifolia</i>	Sheep-Laurel	American Copper, Brown Elfin
<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>	Rice Cut Grass	Least Skipper, Peck's Skipper, Hobomok Skipper
Legumes		Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper, Gray Hairstreak
<i>Lespedeza</i> spp;	Bush Clovers	Eastern Tailed-Blue, Gray Hairstreak, Hoary Edge, Northern Cloudywing, Southern Cloudywing
<i>Lindera Benzoin</i>	Spicebush	Spicebush Swallowtail
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Poplar	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Lupine	Eastern Tailed-Blue, Karner Blue, Frosted Elfin, Gray Hairstreak, Persius Duskywing, Wild Indigo Duskywing, Painted Lady
<i>Panicum clandestinum</i>	Panic Grass	Least Skipper
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switch Grass	Delaware Skipper
<i>Pinus</i> spp.	Pine	Eastern Pine Elfin
<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Cottonwood	Viceroy, Red-spotted Purple, Mourning Cloak, Dreamy Duskywing
<i>Populus</i> spp.	Aspen	Common Tortoiseshell, Mourning Cloak, White Admiral, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Dreamy Duskywing
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	Dorcas Copper

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<i>Prunus americana</i>	Wild Plum	Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple, Spring Azure, Striped Hairstreak
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Black Cherry	Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple, Spring Azure, Striped Hairstreak
<i>Prunus</i> spp.	Cherries and Plums	Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple, Spring Azure, Striped Hairstreak
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Choke Cherry	Spring Azure, Striped Hairstreak
<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	Hop Tree	Giant Swallowtail, Banded Hairstreak, White M Hairstreak, Juvenal's Duskywing, Sleepy Duskywing, Horace's Duskywing, Hickory Hairstreak, Edward's Hairstreak, Red-spotted Purple
<i>Quercus</i> spp.	Oak	Summer Azure
<i>Rhus</i> spp.	Sumac	Gray Common
<i>Ribes</i> spp.	Gooseberry sp.	Gorgone Checkerspot
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-Eyed Susan	Purplish Copper, Bronze Copper
<i>Rumex orbiculatus</i>	Great Water Dock	Compton Tortoiseshell, Acadian Hairstreak, Viceroy, Mourning Cloak, Dreamy Duskywing, Red-spotted Purple
<i>Salix</i> spp.	Willow	Spicebush Swallowtail
<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Sassafras	Indian Skipper, Crossline Skipper, Cobweb Skipper, Hobomok Skipper, Dusted Skipper
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	Cloudless Sulphur
<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>	Wild Senna	Pepper and Salt Skipper
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian Grass	Least Skipper
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Prairie Cordgrass	Spring Azure, Summer Azure
<i>Spiraea</i> spp.	Spiraea	Mourning Cloak, Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Compton Tortoiseshell
<i>Ulmus</i> spp.	Elm	Black Swallowtail
Umbelliferae	Parsley Family	Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Red Admiral, Milbert's Tortoiseshell
<i>Urtica</i> spp.	Nettle	Northern Spring Azure, Pink-edged Sulphur, Striped Hairstreak, Henry's Elfin
<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.	Blueberry	Bog Copper
<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.	Cranberry	Summer Azure
<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>	Wingstem	Baltimore Checkerspot, Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Maple Leaf Viburnum	Baltimore Checkerspot, Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	Baltimore Checkerspot, Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.		Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite Fritillary, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary
<i>Viola</i> spp.	Violets	Giant Swallowtail
<i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>	Prickly Ash	Black Swallowtail
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden Alexander	

Nectaring Plants - Butterflies and skippers do not have the same host specificity for nectaring sources as they do for larval host. Use this guide very generally as you are likely to see a great range of butterflies using a variety of flowers for nectar. page 4 of 5

Scientific Names (Plants)	Common Names (Plants)	Common Names (Butterflies)
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Leadplant	Coral Hairstreak, Banded Hairstreak
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	Pearly Everlasting	Silver-bordered Fritillary
<i>Apocynum</i> spp.	Dogbane	Coral Hairstreak, Banded Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Baltimore Checkerspot, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, American Lady, Common Buckeye, White Admiral, Monarch, Red-spotted Purple
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	Banded Hairstreak, Eyed Brown
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common Milkweed	Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Gray Hairstreak, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite Fritillary, Silvery Checkerspot, Baltimore Checkerspot, American Lady, Red Admiral, Little Wood Satyr, Common Wood-Nymph
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Weed	Spicebush Swallowtail, Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Variegated Fritillary, Silvery Checkerspot, Pearl Crescent
<i>Aster</i> spp.	Aster	Eastern Tailed-Blue, Silver-bordered Fritillary, American Lady, Common Buckeye, Viceroy, Common Wood Nymph
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey Tea	Spicebush Swallowtail, Purplish Copper, Coral Hairstreak, Summer Azure, Karner Blue, Great Spangled Fritillary
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	Giant Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Common Wood Nymph
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Redbud	assorted butterflies
<i>Cirsium muticum</i>	Swamp Thistle	Swamp Metalmark, Baltimore Checkerspot
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Sand Coreopsis	assorted butterflies
<i>Coreopsis tripteris</i>	Tall Tickseed	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate Leaf Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus amomum</i>	Silky Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus drummondii</i>	Roughleaf Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus rugosa</i>	Roundleaf Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red-osier Dogwood	assorted butterflies
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	assorted butterflies
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Rattlesnake-Master	assorted butterflies
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Boneset	Silver-bordered Fritillary, Milbert's Tortoiseshell
<i>Eupatorium</i> spp.	Joe Pye Weed	Giant Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Orange Sulphur, Variegated Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Viceroy, Eyed Brown,
<i>Fragaria</i> spp.	Strawberry	Coral Hairstreak, Gray Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Silvery Blue
<i>Helianthus occidentalis</i>	Western Sunflower	assorted butterflies
<i>Hypericum</i> spp.	St. Johns Wort	Karner Blue
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Iris	Silver-bordered Fritillary

Scientific Names (Plants)	Common Names (Plants)	Common Names (Butterflies)
<i>Liatris</i> spp.	Blazing Star	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Aphrodite Fritillary, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Common Wood Nymph
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	assorted butterflies
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Lupine	Spicebush Swallowtail, Painted Lady
<i>Malus coronaria</i>	Crabapple	Spicebush Swallowtail
<i>Mentha</i> spp.	Mints	Gray Hairstreak
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Bee Balm	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Great Spangled Fritillary, Common Wood Nymph, Monarch
<i>Monarda punctata</i>	Horsemint	Karner Blue
<i>Phlox pilosa</i>	Phlox	Karner Blue
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Common Ninebark	assorted butterflies
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	Dorcas Copper, Swamp Metalmark, Baltimore Checkerspot
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Black Cherry	assorted butterflies
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Chokecherry	American Lady, Silvery Blue
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow Coneflower	assorted butterflies
<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Staghorn Sumac	Banded Hairstreak, Summer Azure, American Snout, Silvery Checkerspot, Red Admiral, White Admiral, Little Wood Satyr, Red-spotted Purple
<i>Rubus</i> spp.	Blackberry	Spicebush Swallowtail, Coral Hairstreak, Karner Blue, Pearl Crescent, Painted Lady, Viceroy
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-Eyed Susan	Dorcas Copper, Coral Hairstreak, Swamp Metalmark, Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Milbert's Tortoiseshell,
<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i>	Three-Lobed Coneflower	assorted butterflies
<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	Cup Plant	assorted butterflies
<i>Silphium terebinthinaceum</i>	Prairie-Dock	assorted butterflies
<i>Solidago</i> spp.	Goldenrod	Clouded Sulphur, Purplish Copper, Gray Hairstreak, American Snout, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Viceroy, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, Eastern Tailed-Blue
<i>Sorghastum nutans</i>	Indian Grass	Pepper and Salt Skipper
<i>Spiraea</i> spp.	Spiraea sp.	Coral Hairstreak, Summer Azure
<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.	Blueberry	Spicebush Swallowtail, Silvery Blue
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue Vervain	Orange Sulphur, Common Wood-Nymph
<i>Veronia missurica</i>	Ironweed	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Monarch
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's-Root	assorted butterflies
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Maple Leaf Viburnum	Henry's Elfin
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	assorted butterflies
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Nannyberry	assorted butterflies
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Black Haw	assorted butterflies
<i>Viburnum rafinesquianum</i>	Downy Arrow-wood Viburnum	assorted butterflies
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	Highbush Cranberry	assorted butterflies

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wildtype native plant nursery

wildtypeplants.com

517.244.1140

orders@wildtypeplants.com