



Shrubs that Attract Butterflies

Buddleia davidii - Butterfly Bush

This is easily the most popular bush to plant in northern butterfly gardens since we don't have to worry about it spreading. It produces spires of tiny, honey scented, flowers that draw butterflies like a magnet.

Caryopteris x clandonensis - Bluebeard

The amazing blue flowers of Caryopteris appear in late summer and continue thru fall. They attract the late season butterflies (and bees) in droves. Give it well-drained soil and lots of sun.

Ceanothus americanus - New Jersey Tea

New Jersey Tea is a deeply rooting native, making it especially drought tolerant. The white flower poms are attractive to all pollinators. It's the host plant for Spring Azure and Summer Azure butterflies.

Cephalanthus occidentalis - Buttonbush

Buttonbush is a wetlands native of eastern North America and it's particularly popular with Tiger Swallowtail Butterflies. The blooms are white and look like spikey ping pong balls.

Clethra alnifolia - Summersweet

The long, fragrant flower panicles of Summersweet are irresistible to butterflies! This shrub needs lots of moisture to thrive and prefers slightly shady conditions.

Diervilla lonicera - Bush Honeysuckle

Tube-like yellow flowers, resembling the flowers of true honeysuckle, bloom in panicles in early summer. Good for early pollinators. It's a densely branched shrub that typically has amazing fall color.

Heptacodium miconioides - Seven-Son Flower

Seven-Son Flower is a large, fountain-shaped, multi-stemmed shrub. It blooms in late summer with creamy white flower clusters and the bark is exfoliating. The late season nectar it provides is invaluable!

Hibiscus syriacus - Rose of Sharon

The big show-stopping blooms of Rose of Sharon are enough on their own to make this flowering bush that attracts butterflies a must-have for many gardeners. Hummingbirds love it too!



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Hypericum kalmianum - St John's Wort

This ultra-hardy, non-fussy native shrub thrives in almost any type of soil and attracts bees, caterpillars, and butterflies. It's also the host plant for the Gray Hairstreak butterfly. Deer and rabbit-resistant too.

Itea virginica - Sweetspire

Sweetspire boasts drooping spires of tiny white flowers that open from base to tip. This North American native loves moisture, similar to the Summersweet. It attracts early season butterflies.

Salix discolor - Pussy Willow

Pussy Willow shrubs are typically overlooked for ornamental use, but it's extremely important for those early emerging, hungry pollinators! It's the host plant for 18 different butterflies and moths! That means that the Pussy Willow is an absolute "must-have" for pollinator gardens.

Sorbaria sorbifolia - Ash Leaf Spirea

This butterfly magnet blooms in July with creamy white, Astilbe-like plumes. The foliage is extra gorgeous in shades of caramel pink and lime green. Then the foliage turns bronze in the fall!

Weigela florida

This large flowering shrub flowers in early summer, with small tubular pink and white flowers. It flowers best in full sun, though it can take some light shade. Popular with hummingbirds too!