

# Patty's Plants

## July Newsletter 2010

### Butterflies & 4th of July



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*Yellow Swallowtail at my home garden on Norah Leigh Phlox*

When I was little, chasing butterflies around the garden with a butterfly net was one of my favorite activities, (although catching my brother's head in the net instead of the butterflies may have been even more fun). I remember feeling sad when I actually did capture one. I would have to release it right away. How beautiful they are flitting about from plant to plant in the garden. My Grandmother always called them her "Garden Fairies". She would tell us her flowers needed the butterflies as much as they needed her flowers. Of course I never really understood what she meant back then. Little did we know that I would be in the business of selling butterfly food and shelter years later. Funny how things work out sometimes. This newsletter will focus on the flowers more than the individual

types of butterflies. I must admit I am not an expert on these lovely creatures.

There are those who are and I will list some wonderful butterfly associations at the end



*Once Called The 4th of July Butterfly Count From 1985-1999*

of this newsletter. These associations do butterfly counts around the nation and for a short period of time from 1985 to 1999 their counts were called "The 4th of July Count". July is one of the best months to see how many and the types of butterflies are in certain areas around the country.

### Want to Catch the Eye of the Butterfly?

Just like red tones catch the eye of another garden beauty, the hummingbird. Purple, any shade of purple will do to attract butterflies. These flying works of art are attracted to the soft lavender of purple coneflowers to the deep violet blue of heliotrope. Here are just a few purple toned flowers to choose from:

**Agastache foeniculum (Anise Hyssop)** 3-5', The tall stems are topped with lavender blue flowers from blooms July-Sept.

**Nepeta faassenii (Catmint)** 36" x 30"

wid. This has large, impressive flower spikes of violet blue flowers.

**Aster novae-angliae (New England Aster)**, has mounds of pink to royal purple flowers that are very attractive to butterflies especially Monarchs.

**Phlox paniculata 'Blue Paradise'** - a mildew resistant form of Native Prairie Phlox. (We have both) The flowers open a deep blue with white eyes and take on purplish shades during the heat of mid-day, then regain their original indigo coloring in the evening.

There are perennial and annual Salvias at Patty's, **Salvia nemorosa 'May Night'**, perennial and **Salvia farinacea 'Victoria Blue'**-annual, are just a couple. We have a few nice Black and Blue annual salvias left too. You really can't go wrong with any of these to catch their eye.

## So You've Caught their Eye

Now that you've got them where you want them add some yellows and oranges to the mix.

**Coreopsis grandiflora** Yellow Coreopsis produces an abundance of 2" bright yellow flowers. It usually blooms June thru July and attracts several butterfly species for nectar. Deer resistant and drought tolerant. 20"- 30" tall, perennial. Nectar plant.

**Gaillardia grandiflora 'Goblin'** Blanket Flower produces an abundance of 3" bright yellow/red daisy-like flowers. It usually blooms June thru August and attracts several butterfly species for nectar. Deer resistant and drought tolerant. 12-14" tall, perennial. Nectar plant.

**Helenium autumnale** Helen's Flower (Sneezeweed) produces small, daisy like flowers July thru August. Deer resistant and drought tolerant. 24-36", perennial. Host plant



**Not eyes but a predator deterrent (spicebush swallowtail caterpillar)**

Photo by Michael Hodge

for Dainty Sulphur butterfly

**Lantana**, These fast growing annuals grow 18-24 inch and are valued for their eye-catching flowers in combinations of red and yellow, rose and yellow, and lilac and white. They bloom from May to October and are a favorite stop for butterflies.

**Lupinus polyphyllus 'Russell Hybrids'** A favorite among early blooming perennials, Lupine blooms late May thru June. The flower color may be red, pink, purple, lavender, yellow, or white. Many are bi-colored. 30-36". Lupine is a host plant for the Silvery Blue butterfly.

Deer resistant.

**Phlox paniculata 'Orange Perfection'** Large clusters of bright salmon-pink (not really orange as named) flowers from July thru August. 24"-28" tall, perennial. Deer resistant and drought tolerant. Nectar plant.

## Butterflies, Caterpillars and Herbs

Swallowtails love my oregano when I let it flower. Sometimes I don't get out in the garden to deadhead or collect my herbs before they start flowering. **Lavender, basil, mint and anise hyssop** blossoms are some of their favorites. Every year I let my **dill, parsley and fennel** (never plant these in the same area, they are not fond of each other) go to seed at the end of the season so when they come up in the spring I have enough of these herbs for myself and the hungry caterpillars.

That way I don't panic when some of my plants are eaten to pieces. For these naturally painted beauties it's worth it to share a few of my plants.

*May the wings of the butterfly kiss  
the sun  
And find your shoulder to light  
on,  
To bring you luck, happiness and  
riches  
Today, tomorrow and beyond.*

*~Irish Blessing~*

## Bathing Beauties

Butterflies need a place to bask in the sun and stay out of the wind. These are cold-blooded creatures and can't regulate their own body temperatures. Sunbathing in a warm sunny spot helps them warm up their muscles so they can take flight again. Place large flat stones, rocks in nice protected sunny spot for them to spread their wings on. Many flowers make perfect basking platforms too! Try these:

**Shasta Daisy (Leucanthemum)**, Shasta daisies bloom over a long period, from early summer until fall, forming tidy clumps from 2 to 3 feet tall and up to 2 feet across.

**Purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)** has daisy-like flowers with large rich purple or pink rays surrounding a

high brownish-orange cone. The flower heads can reach 4 to 5 inches in diameter. Purple Coneflower stems are long 2 to 3 feet high

**Mexican Sunflower (Tithonia rotundifolia)**, annual A genuine heat-lover, this Mexican Sunflower sets the dog days of summer ablaze with its sizzling orange daisies. Blooms late summer to first fall frost. 3'- 5' tall. Full sun.



*Daisies are perfect basking platforms*

## Favorite Restaurants

**Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly Flower)** is a perennial and Wisconsin Native flower that attracts butterflies. It is also commonly called the butterfly weed, with bright orange flowers bloom in mid-summer. The blooms sit atop plants that grow 24" - 36" tall. Host and nectar plant for caterpillars and butterflies

**Asclepias incarnata (Swamp Milkweed or Red)** a Wisconsin Native perennial with narrow, lance-shaped flowers. Pinkish-red flowers that bloom June-August. 36"-46" height. This is a wonderful host and nectar plant for caterpillars and butterflies.

**Verbena hastata (Blue Vervain)** also a Wisconsin Native with spike-like flowers. Flower color ranges from violet-blue to pinkish purple, blooming August to September.



Photo-Nicole Loomis

Height: 18-24"

**Eupatorium perfoliatum (Common Boneset or Joe-pye weed)**- Upright native with white flower blooming from July to September. 48" high with flowers.

**Liatris Pycnostachya (Prairie Blazing Star)** Wisconsin Native with dense bright purple spikes which bloom from August -September. 36-60" with flowers.

**Buddleia Davidii (Butterfly Bush)** We have : Buddleia Black Knight has the darkest flowers of any Butterfly Bush on the market. Dark purple

FRAGRANT flower spikes are 8-10" long and bloom non-stop from mid summer thru first frost. Needs mulch in late fall. Hardy to -10 degrees.

## Sipping Stations

Butterflies need to stop for refreshments after their long travels. It doesn't matter how much nectar they drink, they still need water.

Make a watering station for the weary travelers by filling a shallow container with equal parts of sand and soil, then moisten it slightly with water. You can make it even more attractive by setting a couple of decorative flat rocks on the surface for a perch and place a pretty flower on it to catch their

eye. This would be a fun project to do with children.

The children can find a different fresh flower to put on each day. The best part is that they will even learn their butterfly flowers this way.

Place the sipping station in an area with some part shade and where the rain-water can keep it moist. Make sure you don't forget to water if we don't get any rain.

### Sipping Stations

*A fun project for you  
and the kids*

## Butterfly Associations

### Wisconsin Butterflies-

<http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org>.

### North American Butterfly Association-

<http://www.naba.org>

### Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association-

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/index.html>



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Natural & Organic Garden  
Supply



## Pesticides and Herbicides

Please try to avoid using these products as much as possible in a butterfly garden. Whether it's organic sprays or not, you must use caution. If you must use something please spray early in the morning or late in the evening when the beneficial insects are sleeping.

This is one organic products that is a bit safer for beneficials:

**Spinosad** is a relatively new insecticide that is made up of two complex organic compounds, spinosyn A (right) and spinosyn D. These compounds are produced by certain microbes that were first discovered in soil found at an abandoned rum factory.

Spinosad is a **broad-spectrum, organic insecticide**. The term "broad-spectrum" means that it is toxic to a wide variety of insects but, surprisingly, spinosad is relatively non-toxic to mammals. Even though it is toxic to most insects, it is relatively safe to use around beneficial and non-target species because it is only toxic if ingested or if a treated surface is contacted while wet.

If used carefully only insects that **actually ingest (eat) something that has been treated**, such as a leaf, are affected. This is different than a lot of other broad-spectrum insecticides that are toxic if the insect merely comes in contact with even the dry insecticide.

*Source: Jack DeAngelis, PhD OSU Ext. Entomologist (ret.)*

We carry this in a concentrate, ready to use and a hose attachment. OMRI Listed

## Patty's Home Butterfly Garden

