

# Native Plants for Butterflies

Learn more about native plants at [kootenaynativeplants.ca](http://kootenaynativeplants.ca)



## You can make a difference for butterflies!

By choosing native plants for your yard and garden you can make your community better for butterflies and for the environment. Native plants provide host plants for caterpillars, nectar for adult butterflies, and shelter at all life stages. Caterpillars, butterflies, and moths are also an important part of the food web, an important food source for many songbirds and bats.

## Butterfly Garden Essentials

In "*Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening in the Pacific Northwest*", M. K. Woodward discusses the essentials of butterfly gardening:

### The Basics

- Start with what you have
- Never use pesticides or herbicides
- No neat-freaks please
- Redefine the word "weed"
- Supply larval food sources (see reverse side)
- Be sure plant foods are available at all time

### Nectar Plants

- large groups of flowers
- overlapping plants that bloom through the season
- a variety of colours
- include night-blooming flowers for moths



## Milkweed and Monarchs

The beloved monarch butterfly is quite rare in the West Kootenay, as is showy milkweed, the only food source for monarch caterpillars. You can help by planting milkweed in your garden along with other native nectar plants for the adult butterflies to feed on. Remember: no milkweed, no monarchs!

### Plant showy milkweed - our only native milkweed!

There is only one milkweed native to our region - showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*). Garden centres sell other, non-native, milkweeds, including the 2017 Perennial Plant of the Year: Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).

Monarch caterpillars eat any milkweed species. Non-native species may introduce insects (i.e. watch out for the bright yellow *Aphis nerii*, not found here yet) and diseases that could spread to showy milkweed. We discourage the planting of other milkweeds.

### Please do not purchase mail-order monarchs!

We all want to help monarchs, but raising and releasing them may do more harm than good. Mail-ordered butterflies could cause the loss of genetic diversity and may introduce new and devastating diseases.

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## Caterpillar Host Plants

Plants that caterpillars can eat are called host plants. Each butterfly species requires distinct host plants to survive. Some caterpillars will only eat one plant type; others will eat from many plant types. Planting these plants in your garden and protecting them where they grow in the wild, is a great way to help butterflies.

## Some common butterflies and their native host plants

Butterfly	Larval Host Plants
Western tiger swallowtail	cottonwood, aspen, willow, chokecherry
Anise swallowtail	<i>Lomatium</i> spp., other parsley family plants
Painted lady	pearly everlasting, thistles, mallow, legumes
Mourning cloak	cottonwood, willows, wild rose
Pine white	pinus, and other conifers
Great spangled fritillary	violets ( <i>Viola</i> spp.)

## Local butterflies-at-risk and selected host plants

Many butterflies are declining in numbers and are considered to be 'at risk.' Let's make it a priority to increase the availability of the host plants, without which these species cannot survive.

Butterfly	Larval Host Plants
Monarch	showy milkweed
Silver-spotted skipper	black locust*, wild licorice
Common checkered skipper	mountain hollyhock
California hair streak	snow-brush, saskatoon, chokecherry, willow
Western green hairstreak	parsnip-flowered buckwheat
Common sooty wing	lambquarters*, maple-leaved goosefoot
Lilac-bordered copper	Douglas' knotweed
Eastern tailed-blue	many plants in the pea family

\*non-native plant that butterflies rely on



Pearly everlasting (left) is a larval food for American lady (middle) and painted lady (right). Numerous bees and butterflies also use pearly everlasting for pollen and nectar. Photos: Pearly Everlasting - AMC New Hampshire, © Beth Zimmer; Butterflies - Wikimedia Commons

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**COLUMBIA POWER**