

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 |

| Scientific Names (Plants) | Common Names (Plants) | Common Name (Butterflies) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <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 foemina</i> | Gray Dogwood | Spring Azure, Summer Azure |
| <i>Cornus</i> spp. | Dogwoods | Spring Azure, Summer Azure |
| <i>Crataegus</i> spp. | Hawthorn | Striped Hairstreak |
| <i>Dalea purpurea</i> | Purple Prairie Clover | Dogface Sulphur, Reakirt's Blue |
| <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 |

| Scientific Names (Plants) | Common Names (Plants) | Common Name (Butterflies) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Populus</i> spp. | Aspen | Common Tortoiseshell, Mourning Cloak, White Admiral, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Dreamy Duskywing |
| <i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> | Shrubby Cinquefoil | Dorcas Copper |
| <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 | |
| <i>Rhus</i> spp. | Sumac | Summer Azure |
| <i>Ribes</i> spp. | Gooseberry sp. | Gray Common |
| <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | Black-Eyed Susan | Gorgone Checkerspot |
| <i>Rumex orbiculatus</i> | Great Water Dock | Purplish Copper, Bronze Copper |
| <i>Salix</i> spp. | Willow | Compton Tortoiseshell, Acadian Hairstreak, Viceroy, Mourning Cloak, Dreamy Duskywing, Red-spotted Purple |
| <i>Sassafras albidum</i> | Sassafras | Spicebush Swallowtail |
| <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> | Little Bluestem | Indian Skipper, Crossline Skipper, Cobweb Skipper, Hobomok Skipper, Dusted Skipper |
| <i>Senna hebecarpa</i> | Wild Senna | Cloudless Sulphur |
| <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> | Indian Grass | Pepper and Salt Skipper |
| <i>Spartina pectinata</i> | Prairie Cordgrass | Least Skipper |
| <i>Spiraea</i> spp. | Spiraea | Spring Azure, Summer Azure |
| <i>Ulmus</i> spp. | Elm | Mourning Cloak, Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Compton Tortoiseshell |
| <i>Umbelliferae</i> | Parsley Family | Black Swallowtail |
| <i>Urtica</i> spp. | Nettle | Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Red Admiral, Milbert's Tortoiseshell |
| <i>Vaccinium</i> spp. | Blueberry | Northern Spring Azure, Pink-edged Sulphur, Striped Hairstreak, Henry's Elfin |
| <i>Verbesina alternifolia</i> | Wingstem | Summer Azure |
| <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. | | Baltimore Checkerspot, Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin |
| <i>Viola</i> spp. | Violets | Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite Fritillary, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary |
| <i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i> | Prickly Ash | Giant Swallowtail |
| <i>Zizia aurea</i> | Golden Alexander | Black Swallowtail |

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) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Aphrodite Fritillary, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Common Wood Nymph |
| <i>Liatris</i> spp. | Blazing Star | |
| <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 |
| | | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Great Spangled Fritillary, Common Wood Nymph, Monarch |
| <i>Monarda fistulosa</i> | Bee Balm | |
| <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 |
| | | Banded Hairstreak, Summer Azure, American Snout, Silvery Checkerspot, Red Admiral, White Admiral, Little Wood Satyr, Red-spotted Purple |
| <i>Rhus typhina</i> | Staghorn Sumac | |
| | | Spicebush Swallowtail, Coral Hairstreak, Karner Blue, Pearl Crescent, Painted Lady, Viceroy |
| <i>Rubus</i> spp. | Blackberry | |
| | | Dorcas Copper, Coral Hairstreak, Swamp Metalmark, Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, |
| <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | Black-Eyed Susan | |
| <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 |
| | | 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>Solidago</i> spp. | Goldenrod | |
| <i>Sorghastum nutans</i> | Indian Grass | Pepper and Salt Skipper |
| <i>Spiraea</i> spp. | <i>Spiraea</i> 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