



## Butterfly Garden Fact Sheet

### Why plant a butterfly garden?

Butterflies are a very important part of the biodiversity of our environment, and gardens provide an important ecosystem for these delightful insects. Providing food for butterflies, as well as their caterpillars, means they will visit and breed in your own 'back yard'. Butterflies and their larvae are linked closely with specific plants and the loss of a particular plant species from an area is often directly responsible for the disappearance of a butterfly species dependent on that plant.

Planting a butterfly garden has many benefits and provides opportunities for students' learning including:

- Students gain a practical understanding of biodiversity.
- Increasing biodiversity provides food for birds, bats, lizards and other animals that visit and stay.
- taking responsibility for designing, planting and maintaining the garden.
- sharing with the community in planning and building the garden.
- increasing respect and understanding for the environment and our connection with it.



Photo: Dingy Swallowtail



Photo: Greenish grass dart

## *Getting started*

There are 4 main requirements for a successful butterfly garden. These are:

- 1) Warmth
- 2) Shelter
- 3) Food
- 4) Water

### **WARMTH**

Pick a sunny spot to plant your garden. Butterflies are cold blooded and rely on warmth from the sun to warm their body and wings for flight. Also, incorporate rocks in your butterfly garden where butterflies can rest and sun themselves.

### **SHELTER & PROTECTION**

Plant some shrubs in your garden to provide shelter from weather. Butterflies also require shelter from predators to feed and lay eggs. You will need to be as organic as possible, and resist using chemicals when butterflies or caterpillars are around.

### **FOOD**

Food plants need to be chosen for the different stages of the butterflies lifecycle. Plant species are also often specific for different species of butterfly. You will need plants that provide food for the caterpillars (larval host plants) and also plants which provide nectar for mature butterflies. Larval host plants are critical for a successful butterfly habitat. Suitable host plants will persuade the butterflies to stay a while and lay eggs. Grow a variety of plants so that a reliable food source is available throughout the year.



Photo: Monarch Butterfly larvae and adult

### **WATER**

Butterflies prefer to drink their water from mud pools, because they gain much needed salt and minerals from the mud. In your garden provide a moist shallow area in the dirt for them to drink from or include a bird bath or shallow dish with a handful of dirt added.

## *What to plant in your butterfly garden.*

For Australian butterflies it is best to plant Australian natives, but many exotic plants can also act as host plants for adults and larvae.

For a full range of plants for your area, there are several websites with comprehensive plant lists and nurseries.

<http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/index.php?page=bfw-resources>

<http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/index.php?page=water-wise-and-drought-tolerant-gardens>

<http://www.butterflygardening.net.au/plants/NectarPlants.htm>

<http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/foodhost1.htm>

<http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/Butterfly%20Larval%20host%20plants,%20Adelaide%20South%20Australia.pdf>

Some exotic plants known to attract butterflies include species of:

<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>
<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Butterfly bush
<i>Ammi majus</i>	Queen Anne's Lace
<i>Hebe species</i>	Hebe
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme
<i>Salvia species</i>	Salvia, sage
<i>Nepeta faassenii</i>	Catmint
<i>Asclepias physocarpa</i> (specific to Monarch butterflies)	Swan plant (this can become a weed so remove seed heads before they spread)
<i>Chieranthus/Erysimum species</i>	Wallflower



*A bushland butterfly habitat*



*An ornamental butterfly garden*

## Teaching resources

### Web links

**Urban Forest Biodiversity Program.** This group sponsors the *backyards4wildlife* website that has great information about biodiversity in the Adelaide region. They encourage planting gardens for wildlife, including butterflies.

They also offer 2 good educational resources for primary students:

**Bio-what?** A starter kit for primary schools to conserve and promote biodiversity in their school community.

**The Zoom Lens Project** has been designed for upper primary students and provides a framework that leads teachers and students towards greater understanding of themselves as *part of* and *partners in* their environment.

<http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/>

**Butterfly Conservation SA.** Lots of information on butterfly species in South Australia, history, photos and gardening for butterflies. Also has a good DVD for schools to order.

<http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/Articles.htm>

**SA Museum.** The Museum has a Biodiversity Gallery, with resources and opportunities to visit. The Gallery offers students insights into the environmental complexity of South Australia.

<http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/education/inthemuseum> for general biodiversity.

<http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/online/gallery/butterflies/index.html> for butterfly information.

**Bringing back the Butterflies.** A series of 3 units of work written by Jackie Miers.

[http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/butadelaide/butterfly\\_garden.html](http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/butadelaide/butterfly_garden.html)

**The Bug Shop.** Butterflies and chrysalis kits available online.

<http://www.bugshop.com.au/pro3.html>

**Steps and activities for setting up a Butterfly garden.**

[http://www.wettropics.gov.au/st/rainforest\\_explorer/P/P04Butterfly/Pactivities04.htm](http://www.wettropics.gov.au/st/rainforest_explorer/P/P04Butterfly/Pactivities04.htm)

**National Geographic.** Short videos on butterflies from National Geographic Kids.

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/kids/animals-pets-kids/bugs-kids/butterflies-kids.html>

**ABC TV.** Small snippets of information for young children.

<http://www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/animals/BUTTERFLIES.htm>

### Books



### **Backyards For Wildlife Booklet**

This booklet describes how you can develop an environmentally friendly garden that attracts and supports native wildlife using Backyards for Wildlife principles. Download from <http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/index.php?page=bfw-resources>



**Attracting Butterflies to your Garden: What to grow and conserve in the Adelaide region** is full of information, advice and beautiful photographs of plants and butterflies. Funds raised support the work of Butterfly Conservation South Australia.

Order direct from <http://www.butterflygardening.net.au/>



**The Native Plants of Adelaide** Authors: **P Bagust & L Tout-Smith**  
*'Returning the vanishing natural heritage of the Adelaide Plains to your garden'*

This A5 sized book is a well laid out colour reference guide to Adelaide's Indigenous flora. It is a useful resource for information on bush tucker.

<http://asgap.org.au/APOL2006/jul06-r1.html>

## **Funding Sources**

If you're unsuccessful the first time, make enquires about how to improve your application and simply try again.

**Coles Community grants Program** (\$1000)

<http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/coles-grant>

**Yates Landcare Australia Junior Landcare Gants Program** (\$1000)

<http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/yates-grant>

**The Million Trees Program** offers up to \$1,000 funding to schools in and around the Adelaide Metropolitan Area to assist in the establishment of local native gardens and outdoor classrooms. Technical support and educational resources are also available to help with garden establishment and to assist in linking garden projects to the curriculum.

<http://www.milliontrees.com.au/index.php?page=school-funding>

**Australian Open Garden Scheme**

<http://www.opengarden.org.au/givingprogram.html#donate>

**Local Council Grants**

Contact your local council to see if a grant is available

**NRM Education Grants** – offered at the beginning of each calendar year.

Contact: Lower Murray NRM Education on 8532 9100 or

Upper Murray NRM Education on 8582 4477 for more information

Google 'Environmental Grants' for more extensive options

