



# 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 backyard or schoolyard. 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:

- Gaining 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.



**Dingy Swallowtail**

Credit: Common Lime Butterfly *Papilio demoleus* by Kadavoor



**Greenish Grass-dart**

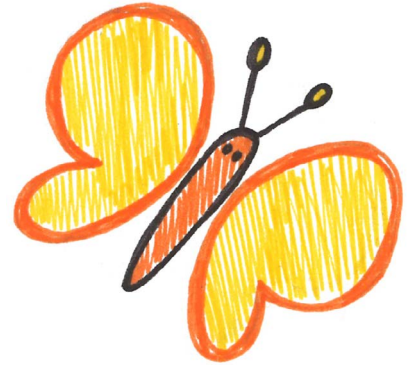
Credit: John Tann



## Getting started

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

- Warmth
- Shelter
- Food
- 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. Incorporate rocks in your butterfly garden where butterflies can rest and sun themselves.

## Shelter and protection

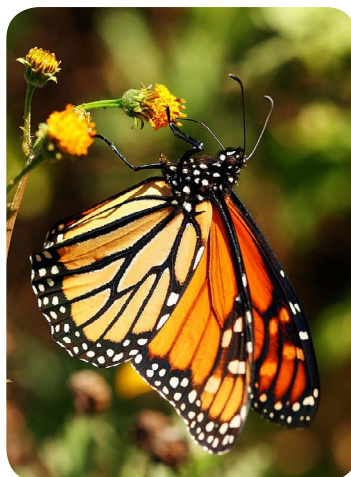
Plant some shrubs in your garden to provide shelter from weather. Butterflies also require shelter from predators to feed and lay eggs. You will need to be as organic as possible, and resist using chemicals when butterflies or caterpillars are around.

## 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.

## 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.



## Monarch Butterfly - larvae and adult

Credit: Louise Docker



## 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.

- **Backyards 4 Wildlife:** resources for Adelaide gardens, including ‘Bringing Butterflies Back’ fact sheet  
[www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/index.php?page=bfw-resources](http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/index.php?page=bfw-resources)
- **Butterfly Nectar Plants for the Adelaide region**  
[www.butterflygardening.net.au/plants/NectarPlants.htm](http://www.butterflygardening.net.au/plants/NectarPlants.htm)
- **Butterfly Conservation South Australia:** includes a list of larval host plants  
<http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/>

Some exotic plants known to attract butterflies include:

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Butterfly bush
<i>Ammi majus</i>	Queen Anne’s lace
<i>Hebe</i> species	Hebe
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme
<i>Salvia</i> species	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</i> species	Wallflower



**Butterfly Bush**

Credit: Pancrat





# Teaching resources

## Websites

**Backyards4Wildlife:** [www.backyards4wildlife.com.au](http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au)

This website has great information about biodiversity in the Adelaide region. They encourage planting gardens for wildlife, including butterflies.

They also offer two good educational resources for students:

**BioWhat?** is a teaching resource that has been designed to start primary schools on the road to discovering the meaning of biodiversity for their schools and local area. It encourages networking between schools and community groups, both locally and globally.

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.

**Butterfly Conservation SA:** <http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/index.htm>

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

**SA Museum:** [www.samuseum.sa.gov.au](http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au)

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

**The Bug Shop:** [www.bugshop.com.au](http://www.bugshop.com.au)

Butterflies and chrysalis kits available online.

**Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Education:** [www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/files/74880033-1a9b-4024-b2e2-a27a00e235e8/butterflies-adelaide-identification-fact.pdf](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/files/74880033-1a9b-4024-b2e2-a27a00e235e8/butterflies-adelaide-identification-fact.pdf)

Butterflies of the Adelaide Region identification chart.

**Butterfly Gardening:** [www.butterflygardening.net.au](http://www.butterflygardening.net.au)

A South Australian site. View information about the plant community your garden is in, read about the butterflies that you can encourage to visit, and use the plant lists to create a butterfly garden.



**Caper White**

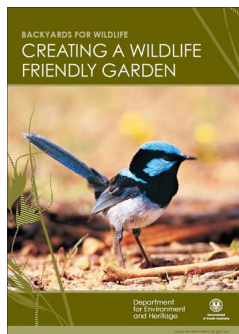
Credit: Donald Hobern



## Books

*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 [www.butterflygardening.net.au](http://www.butterflygardening.net.au)



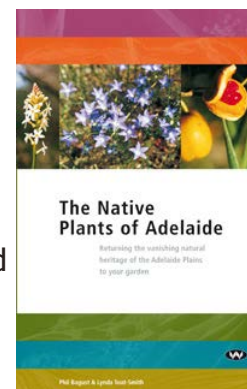
### *Backyards For Wildlife Booklet*

This booklet describes how you can develop an environmentally-friendly garden that attracts and supports native wildlife using Backyards for Wildlife principles.

Download from [www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/uploads/BFW\\_Booklet\\_Web.pdf](http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/uploads/BFW_Booklet_Web.pdf)

*The Native Plants of Adelaide: Returning the vanishing natural heritage of the Adelaide Plains to your garden* by Phil Bagust and Lynda Tout-Smith

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. Available from Wakefield Press.



## Funding Sources

**Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants:** [www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/coles-grant](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/coles-grant)

This program provides grants of up to \$1000 to schools and youth groups to help create gardens in their grounds or community, such as bush tucker gardens, water wise gardens or veggie gardens.

**Yates Creative Gardening Grants:** [www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/yates-creative-gardening-grants](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/yates-creative-gardening-grants)

Yates awards 25 grants of up to \$1000 each to schools and youth groups who can demonstrate innovative ways of creating a garden within their school or community. Grants are awarded to the most innovative, sustainable and environmentally conscious entries.

**Australian Open Garden Scheme:** [www.opengarden.org.au/givingprogram.html#donate](http://www.opengarden.org.au/givingprogram.html#donate)

Open Gardens Australia is committed to encouraging gardening and improving our environment. One of the ways they achieve this is by funding community-based garden projects. Each year, funds surplus to their operational costs are returned to the community in the form of grants.

### Local Council Grants

Contact your local council to see if a grant is available.

*Search online for 'Environmental Grants' for more extensive options.*



## Curriculum links

Curriculum links provided are for creating and maintaining a garden, and learning about and observing butterflies.

	Year	Content Description
Science	F	Living things have basic needs, including food and water ( <a href="#">ACSSU002</a> )
	1	Living things have a variety of external features ( <a href="#">ACSSU017</a> )
	1	Living things live in different places where their needs are met ( <a href="#">ACSSU211</a> )
	2	Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves ( <a href="#">ACSSU030</a> )
	4	Living things have life cycles ( <a href="#">ACSSU072</a> )
	4	Living things, including plants and animals, depend on each other and the environment to survive ( <a href="#">ACSSU073</a> )
	5	Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment ( )
	6	The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment ( <a href="#">ACSSU094</a> )
	7	Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food webs; human activity can affect these interactions ( <a href="#">ACSSU112</a> )
Butterfly gardens also use Science Inquiry Skills in all year levels, including Planning and Conducting (making observations about the growth of plants and butterflies) and Communicating (sharing their observations and results). Butterfly gardens also use Science as a Human Endeavour in all year levels, through exploring and observing. See ACARA for details.		
D & T	F-2	Explore how plants and animals are grown for food, clothing and shelter and how food is selected and prepared for healthy eating ( <a href="#">ACTDEK003</a> )
	3-4	Investigate food and fibre production and food technologies used in modern and traditional societies ( )
	5-6	Investigate how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments ( )
Butterfly gardens also use 'Design and Technologies Processes and Production Skills' to plan and construct the garden. See ACARA for details.		
HPE	F	Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment ( <a href="#">ACPPS007</a> )
	1-2	Identify and explore natural and built environments in the local community where physical activity can take place ( <a href="#">ACPPS023</a> )
	3-4	Participate in outdoor games and activities to examine how participation promotes a connection between the community, natural and built environments, and health and wellbeing ( <a href="#">ACPPS041</a> )
	5-6	Explore how participation in outdoor activities supports personal and community health and wellbeing and creates connections to the natural and built environment ( <a href="#">ACPPS059</a> )
	7-8	Plan and implement strategies for connecting to natural and built environments to promote the health and wellbeing of their communities ( <a href="#">ACPPS078</a> )
9-10	Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and others' connection to community and natural and built environments ( <a href="#">ACPPS097</a> )	

Visit the ACARA website for more information.

Note 1: links can be made to other subject areas including English (Creating texts), Maths (Measurement), and Geography. Refer to ACARA.

Note 2: For Cross-curriculum priorities and General capabilities, check the Content Descriptions at ACARA.