

Butterfly and Hummingbird Tips and Ideas

Butterflies

A butterfly or moth's life cycle exists in four stages:

Egg

Larva (or caterpillar)

Chrysalis

Butterfly

Each stage of the butterfly's life has different nutritional needs. The nectar plants for butterflies are often not the same plants used by the larva. For this reason, it's necessary to provide both host and larval plants in your landscape.

Butterflies are attracted to large splashes of color—red, orange, yellow, and magenta—planted in full sun. Consider plants that will provide a spring-to-fall display of color and nectar. The plants should be protected against heavy winds, by creating a windbreak by planting larger plants or shrubs against the prevailing winds. Provide watering areas and damp, muddy areas which butterflies will use to extract salts from the soil. Basking rocks are essential for the butterfly's regulation of body temperature.

Pesticides in your garden would be detrimental to the butterfly. Remember that butterflies do go through a caterpillar stage that will eat the leaves of plants and trees.

Some sample native plants that are attractive to butterflies include: Meadowsweet (*Spirea latifolia*), New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), Spice Bush (*Lindera benzoin*), Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), several species of milkweed (*Asclepias*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), asters (*Aster*) and many more.

Hummingbirds

Pennsylvania is home to one species of hummingbird, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Like butterflies, hummingbirds are attracted to large splashes of color, particularly red. Tubular flowers, such as cardinal flower, trumpet vine and jewelweed, are hummingbird food sources, as well as commercial bird feeders.

To attract birds, place hummingbird feeders out in mid-March, when the birds begin returning to Pennsylvania. Remember to wash the feeder weekly, and do not use honey or food coloring. A few examples of native plants that attract hummingbirds include wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), and Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*).