



Butterflies and other wildlife rely on native plants to provide food throughout their entire lifecycle. The tables below give examples of excellent native plants commonly found in the Southeast that should be our first choices for landscaping, particularly in butterfly and pollinator gardens. Although the tables refer to butterflies, these plants support almost all native and introduced pollinators like honeybees.

NATIVE BUTTERFLY HOST PLANTS (CATERPILLARS)

Name	Height	Butterfly Caterpillars	Comments
American Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	75'	Tawny Emperor, Hackberry Emperor, American Snout, Question Mark, Mourning Cloak	Birds eat fruit
Wild Cherry Tree <i>Prunus serotina</i>	75'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Cecropia moth, Red spotted Purple, Coral Hairstreak	Excellent tree for wildlife
Elm trees <i>Ulmus species</i>	Varies	Question Mark, Red Admiral, Comma	Shade and drought tolerant
Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	20-60'	Spicebush Swallowtail	Summer/fall berries also attract birds
Pawpaw <i>Asimina triloba</i>	16'	Zebra Swallowtail	Sole host for this caterpillar
Tulip Poplar <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	70'	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail	Tennessee state tree, fast growing
Milkweeds <i>Asclepias</i>	Varies	Monarch	13 native species, important nectar plants
Wild indigo <i>Baptisia</i>	24-36"	Silver-spotted skipper	Drought tolerant; nitrogen fixing
Dutchman's Pipevine <i>Aristolochia</i>	Vine	Pipevine Swallowtail	Shade
Passionvine <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	Vine	Gulf and Variegated Fritillaries	Easy to grow; can be aggressive
Golden alexander <i>Zizia aurea</i>	30"	Black Swallowtail	Tolerates some shade
Pussytoes <i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>	Groundcover	American Lady	Dry shade, allelopathic
Asters (large family)	Varies	Pearl Crescent	Important nectar plants as well
Thistles	Varies	Painted Lady	Also good nectar plants
Spicebush <i>Lindera benzoin</i>	6-12'	Spicebush Swallowtail	Part sun; need both male and female for berries
Toothwort <i>Dentaria</i>	8-16"	West Virginia White	Spring ephemeral
Violets <i>Viola sp.</i>	4-6"	Variegated Fritillary	Cool shade
Sunflowers <i>Helianthus spp.</i>	3-9'	American Lady, Giant Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Wild Indigo Duskywing	Needs plenty of space in the landscape; excellent nectar plants
Swamp Verbena <i>Verbena hastata</i>	2-5'	Common buckeye, Least skipper	Needs moisture
Smooth rock cress <i>Arabis laevigata</i>	To 40"	Falcate Orangetip	Spring only

TOP NATIVE NECTAR PLANTS

Name	Height	Color	Bloom Month	Butterfly Attracted	Comments
Spring beauty <i>Claytonia virginica</i>	4-12"	Pink, white	3-5	Falcate Orangetip	Rich woodland soil
Toothwort <i>Dentaria sp.</i>	8-16"	White	3-5	West Virginia White, Falcate Orangetip	Wooded shade
Rose verbena <i>Verbena canadensis</i>	0-24"	Deep pink, purple	3-9	Many	Needs dry, rocky soil
Redbud Tree <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	20-35'	Pink	4-5	Hairstreaks, Duskywings	Tolerates dry soil
Locust tree <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	50-75'	White	4-6	Silver-spotted Skipper	Upland, dry
Native honeysuckle <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Vine	Bright scarlet	4-9	Many	Make sure it is a NATIVE honeysuckle
Bottlebrush buckeye <i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	10-15'	White	5-6	Swallowtails	Light shade
Summersweet <i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	2-6'	White, pink	5-6	Many	Will bloom in shade
Buttonbush <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	3-10'	White	6-8	Swallowtails, Ladies	Needs low, wet areas
Bee balm <i>Monarda sp.</i>	1-3'	White, pink, red	5-9	Many	7 native species
Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis sp.</i>	10"-3'	Yellow, orange	5-9	Many	8 native species
Swamp rose mallow <i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	4-7'	White	6-9	Several	Needs wet, sunny area
Purple coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	2-4'	Pink, purple	6-10	Many	Easy to grow from seed
Blazing star <i>Liatris sp</i>	8"-4'	Purple	7-9	Many	7 native species
Mountain mints <i>Pycnanthemum sp</i>	2-4'	White	7-8	Various	3 native species
Cardinal Flower <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	2-6'	Red	7-9	Many	Needs wet soil
Joe pye-weed <i>Eupatorium sp.</i>	2-10'	Pink	7-9	Swallowtails	3 native species, needs moisture
Pickrel-weed <i>Pontederia cordata</i>	2'	Violet-blue	7-9	Black Swallowtail	Shallow water, full sun
Mistflower <i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	1-3'	Blue	7-10	Many	Adaptable and free seed sowing
Goldenrod <i>Solidago sp.</i>	1-6'	Yellow, white	7-10	Many	33 native species, shade to sun
Great Blue lobelia <i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	2-5'	Purple	8-9	Several	Fall-blooming
Ironweed <i>Vernonia</i>	5-9'	Purple, magenta	8-9	Several	Prefers moist, acidic soil
New England aster <i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>	Varies	Purple, pink	8-10	Many	Likes moist to wet soil
Phlox <i>Phlox sp.</i>	1-4'	Pink, blue, white	Varies	Many	11 native species, shade to sun