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Butterfly Garden Basics

By Deborah Shelton

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by Deborah Shelton

Cultivating a special home in your yard for butterflies will introduce your children to a world of beauty and wonder. It's a project that you and your family will enjoy in the planting stages, and long after. There are five basic things to remember when planning a butterfly garden:

1. Butterflies love sunlight! Whether you choose to plant a traditional garden or a container garden, make sure that the plants are in direct sunlight for much of the day.
2. Butterflies like to "puddle." Your garden needs a sort of watering hole for the butterflies to drink from. This can be done by simply filling a terra cotta pot or small plastic bucket with small rocks or pebbles about two inches from the brim. Add water to fill the remaining space. Place the puddle in the center of your garden.
3. Butterflies like lots of color! Group clusters of the same plant together to make them easier for butterflies to

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see. A group of colorful flowers attracts them easier than single flowers.

4. Butterflies love to eat nectar. Use several of these nectar-producing plants to attract them: milkweed, azalea, goldenrod, black-eyed susan, zinnia, aster, phlox, Japanese honeysuckle, ironweed. A few nectar-producing shrubs are: butterfly bush, various fruit trees, privet, lilac and redbud.

5. Butterflies need a place to lay their eggs. Witness the entire lifecycle of your new garden friend! Provide host

plants where female butterflies can lay their eggs. Some host plants include: snapdragon, violets, milkweed, daisies, parsley, dill, Queen Anne's Lace, aster and clovers.

About the Author: Deborah Shelton is the author of *The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones*. Visit *The Five Minute Parent* for fun rainy-day activities, family links, and a free email newsletter filled with craft ideas, guest articles, contests and so much more!

<http://www.fiveminuteparent.com>

More About Butterfly Gardening

By Nicky Pilkington

When creating a butterfly garden, the possibilities of what to include in your butterfly garden design are endless. Below are some suggestions to help get you started. They are designed to spark the creative process of your mind and get you started on your way to creating a lovely butterfly garden.

Before you even begin your butterfly garden, find out which species of butterflies are in your area. Consider taking an exploratory hike around your location with a butterfly identification book. This may take a little extra time and effort, but the results will be worth it. After you have compiled your list of local butterfly species, be sure to write down in your butterfly garden plan what these particular species of butterflies use for nectar and food plants.

Be sure that your garden is in a location that provides at least six hours of sunlight per day. Butterflies are cold-blooded creatures and therefore do better where they are warm and sheltered.

Wind can be a butterfly's worst enemy so be sure to have plenty of wind protection in your design. You can plant tall shrubs and other plants in order to create a wind break, but a location that avoids heavy winds is even better.

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The best of all would be a butterfly garden placed on the sunny side of your home with windbreaks on both the west and east sides, or wherever the prevailing winds come from in your area. Try and locate your garden close to a window so you can view the butterflies from indoors. Provide seating outside too.

If possible, you could excavate an area and build a stone wall around it. This would create the ideal windbreak for your butterflies. Make gravel pathways around your garden to save walking in mud.

There are many creative ways for constructing a butterfly garden. Take your time to design a garden that you will enjoy and be proud of.

Find out more about gardening at



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