Weeds

Your Key to Butterfly Success

WHY WEEDS?  Butterflies feed and lay their eggs on many common weeds as well as on some prettier relatives. They also lay eggs on some prettier relatives of these weeds. Many also lay eggs on trees, shrubs, and vines.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

FOR BEST RESULTS:

1. Plant a variety of larval food plants (including weeds!)
2. Plant attractive nectar plants for all seasons.
3. Do not use pesticides. The plant will absorb the pesticide and kill the caterpillar.
4. Go WILD! Keep an area of your yard untouched. If you rake everything up, trim everything back and mow everything to the ground—eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises, and butterflies will not have a place to live over the winter. A few butterflies, like the monarch, migrate south while most other butterflies remain here for the winter.
5. Invite a neighbor to begin butterfly planting with you. When others in the area create stations that interconnect, we create corridors that butterflies can travel. Corridors allow butterflies to travel according to their needs and to maintain their genetic diversity.

WHY WEEDS?  Butterflies feed and lay their eggs on:

cheeseweed - Painted Lady, West Coast Lady, Gray Hairstreak & Common-checkered Skipper.
dock - Purplish Copper
fennel (anise) - Anise Swallowtail
milkweed - Monarch
mustard - Veined White, Sara Orange-tip, & Cabbage White
nettle - Red Admiral & Satyr Comma
pearly everlasting - American Lady
plantain - Chalcedon Checkerspot & Buckeye
sorrel - Purplish Copper
thistle - Mylitta Crescent & Painted Lady
grasses (unknown) - CA Ringlet and Skippers

They also lay eggs on some prettier relatives of these weeds including hollyhocks (West Coast Lady), sunflowers, asters (Field Crescent, Northern Checkerspot, American Lady) and snapdragons (Buckeye).

Others lay eggs on trees, shrubs, and vines, such as oak (CA Sister, CA Hairstreak, Mournful Duskywing), willows (Mourning Cloak, Western Tiger Swallowtail, Lorquin’s Admiral), alders (Western Tiger Swallowtail), ceanothus (CA Tortoiseshell, Spring Azure), california coffeeflower (Pale Swallowtail), passion flower (Gulf Fritillary), pipevine (pipevine swallowtail), mistletoes (Great Purple Hairstreak)