

The Butterfly Zone

Creighton Educational Garden

Designed to meet the needs of the butterflies that live in or migrate through the campus of Wellesley College, this "life cycle garden" supports all stages of the typical butterfly life cycle with —

Host Plants to Feed Caterpillars



When female butterflies are ready to lay eggs, they seek out host plants for their caterpillar offspring by "tasting" chemical cues with their feet and identifying the right plants using visual signals such as leaf shape. Host plants for caterpillars tend to be specialized;

for example, Great Spangled Fritillary caterpillars are reported to feed exclusively on violets, and Monarchs famously feed on milkweeds, sequestering the plants' toxins for their own defense against predators.

Nectar-rich Flowers to Sustain Butterflies



Adult butterflies typically can obtain nectar from a wide range of open, tubular-shaped flowers, and seem to prefer plants with flowers clustered together, as in *Verbena*, *Buddleia*, *Asclepias*, and the large Composite family, which includes *Echinacea*, *Rudbeckia*, and the asters.

Small Water Feature to Support Life



A shallow "puddle" is critical for butterflies who take in water as well as salts from the evaporated puddle edges.



Monarch Caterpillar



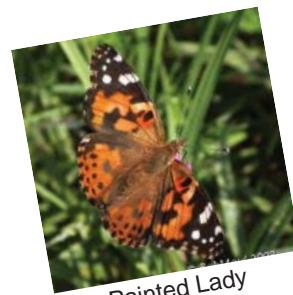
Monarda fistulosa



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Baltimore Checkerspot



Painted Lady

Wellesley College Butterfly Garden

Many of the plants in the garden serve as host plants for caterpillars. Some of these relationships are quite specific:

- * **Hairy Beard-Tongue** *Penstemon hirsutus* is a caterpillar host for **Baltimore Checkerspot** (*Euphydryas phaeton*)
- * Milkweeds *Asclepias* are caterpillar hosts for the **Monarch** butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)
- * **Pussytoes** *Antennaria plantaginifolia* is a caterpillar host for **American Lady** (*Vanessa virginiensis*)
- * The genus **Viola** is a caterpillar host for the **Great Spangled Fritillary** (*Speyeria cybele*)

Others plants in the garden provide nectar for butterflies and other pollinators. Those most visited by butterflies include:

- * **Common Milkweed** *Asclepias sullivantii*
- * **Wild Bergamot** *Monarda fistulosa var Wahpe Washtemna*
- * **Blue Buckle Stiff Beardtongue** *Penstemon virgatus*
- * **Hairy Beard-Tongue** *Penstemon hirsutus*
- * **Small's Penstemon** *Penstemon smallii*
- * **Purpletop Vervain** *Verbena bonariensis*
- * **Butterfly bush** *Buddleia davidii*

There are many butterflies found in Middlesex County, the most commonly sighted ones in this garden include:

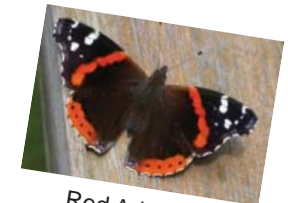
- * **Monarch** *Danaus plexippus*
- * **Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui*
- * **Pipevine Swallowtail** *Battus philenor*
- * **Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta*
- * **Cabbage White** *Pieris rapae*
- * **Great Spangled Fritillary** *Speyeria cybele*
- * **Eastern Tiger Swallowtail** *Papilio glaucus*



Verbena



Penstemons hirsutus



Red Admiral



Great Spangled Fritillary

Help us document butterfly activity in the Wellesley College Creighton Educational Garden.

- Tell us what butterflies you see in the garden.
- Let us know if you see butterflies visiting any of the other flower species in the garden.

Your Own Butterfly Garden

*A fun and exciting way
to facilitate butterfly conservation!*

Increasing urbanization and development threatens critical butterfly habitat. By including both host plants for caterpillars and nectar plants for butterflies, you will greatly increase the number of butterflies in your home garden and provide a haven for these beautiful and intriguing animals.



Design your garden using plants with a succession of blooming times throughout the growing season to provide a steady nectar supply. This will attract different butterflies at different times depending on their life cycles and migration habits. Remember to grow host plants to support the complete butterfly life cycle.

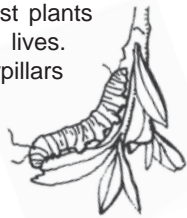
Look for Eggs

On the undersides of leaves there might be butterfly eggs. Females will lay eggs in groups, singly or in patterns depending on the type of butterfly. They attach the eggs to the plants with a glue-like fluid. For most species eggs are laid during the growing season; however there are some butterflies whose eggs don't hatch until the next growing season. Eggs come in many shapes and colors, according to species.



Look for Caterpillars

On the leaves and stems of host plants caterpillars spend their short lives. Butterfly eggs hatch into caterpillars which eat the egg casing and then the fresh plant material of the host plant. As caterpillars eat and grow, they molt many times. The intermediate stages between molts are called instars.



Learn about Local Butterflies

Massachusetts Audubon's handy "Guide to Northeastern Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening," and the fabulous book "Butterflies of the East Coast: An Observer's Guide," by Rick Cech and Guy Tudor (Princeton Univ. Press, 2005).

Visit www.butterfliesandmoths.org to discover your local butterflies.

Wellesley College Botanic Gardens Friends of Wellesley College Botanic Gardens



A shared tradition of bringing horticulture to the College and the Community.



For more information about WCBG and/or WCBG Friends, please visit our website:

www.wellesley.edu/WCBG

or contact the Friends:

Friends of Wellesley College Botanic Gardens
Science Center
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481-8203

781-283-3094

wcbgfriends@wellesley.edu

Butterfly image credits:

Painted Lady, Red Admiral
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
Bob Moul bmoul1@comcast.net
Great Spangled Fritillary
Barbara Spencer bspencer@mapinternet.com

Baltimore Checkerspot
Frank Model fsmode1@aol.com

All other photos by WCBG staff

Illustrations by Jeanne Kunze

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