



Washington Area Butterfly Club

Deer-Resistant Butterfly Plants

This list of butterfly nectar and host plants, currently fairly general, has been gathered from several sources: books, web sites, and the experiences of some club members. It is important to keep in mind that there are probably no plants that are 100% deer-proof. Deer near starvation due to overpopulation or a severe winter will eat even toxic plants. Nevertheless, choosing less-palatable plants can help you to curb their destructive effects on your garden. It is our hope that by gathering firsthand accounts from area gardeners, we will be able to refine this list to include the very best deer-resistant plants for the D.C. metro area.

Tips

Nectar Plants

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Bibliography

Tips

Try surrounding and interplanting your garden with plants deer strongly dislike, particularly plants with strong odors like mints and herbs. Creating a barrier in this way can act as enough as a deterrent that the deer may not notice some of the tastier plants scattered among the herbs.

Try creating sunken or raised beds; reportedly, deer don't like going up or down steep grades unless it's absolutely essential.

Another strategy is to try deliberately planting a field of some of the deer's favorite plants some distance away from your main garden. The deer may not move on to your garden if they find what they are looking for elsewhere; on the other hand, this could also serve to entice deer closer to your garden.

Deers' favorite plants can vary widely depending on habitat and area of the country, so some experimentation is essential. As we receive feedback from metro-area butterfly gardeners, we hope to revise and improve this list to include the most dependable deer-resistant plants for the D.C. area.

Got deer? Got a butterfly garden (particularly in the D.C. metro area)? You can help! [E-mail the webmaster](#) with your tips on which plants have survived well for you—and which were immediately devoured.

Nectar Plants

Common Name	Latin Name
Abelia bush	<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>
Angelica species	esp. <i>Angelica gigas</i>
Beebalm, Bergamot, Oswego tea	<i>Monarda didyma</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia</i> species
Boltonia	<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>
Butterfly Weed <i>NOTE: May not be as resistant as other Milkweeds.</i>	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Candytuft	<i>Iberis</i>
Caryopteris, Blue Mist shrub	<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>
Catmint	<i>Nepeta mussini</i>
Catnip	<i>Nepeta cataria</i>
Chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>

Dianthus, Carnations, Pinks	<i>Dianthus</i> species, esp. Sweet William, <i>D. barbatus</i>
Dogbane, Indian Hemp	<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>
Floss flower	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>
Forget-Me-Nots	<i>Myosotis</i>
Gayfeather, Blazing Star	<i>Liatris</i> species
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> species
Heliotrope, Cherry Pie	<i>Heliotropium</i>
Joe-Pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum, purpurea</i>
Lantana, Shrub Verbena (poisonous)	<i>Lantana camara</i>
Lavender (repels deer)	<i>Lavandula</i> species; esp. <i>L. x intermedia</i> 'Grosso'
Marigolds	<i>Tagetes</i> ; esp. single-flowered varieties like Signet Group
Milkweeds	<i>Asclepias</i> species
Oregano, Marjoram	<i>Origanum</i>
Pennyroyal Mint (repels deer)	<i>Mentha pulegium</i>
Purple Coneflower Note: one club member has reported some problems with deer eating Purple Coneflower.	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>
Queen of the Prairie	<i>Filipendula rubra</i>
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
Speedwell, Veronica	<i>Veronica</i>
Sweet Alyssum	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>

Tansy	<i>Tanacetum</i> species
Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis</i> species
Tiger Lily	<i>Lilium lancifolium</i>
Verbena, Vervain	<i>Verbena</i> species, such as <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea</i> species
Zinnias	<i>Zinnia</i> species

Host Plants

Plants	Butterfly Species Which Use Plant
Bugbane <i>Cimicifuga</i>	Appalachian Azure
Dogwood <i>Cornus</i> species	Spring Azure
Eastern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginianum</i>	Olive (Juniper) Hairstreak
Hollyhocks <i>Alcea rosea</i>	Checkered Skipper, Painted Lady
False Indigo <i>Baptisia</i> species	Indigo Duskywing
Labrador Violet <i>Viola labradorica</i>	Fritillaries
Locust tree <i>Robinia</i>	Silver-Spotted Skipper

Milkweeds <i>Asclepias</i> species	Monarch
Parsley <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Black Swallowtail
Rue <i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Black Swallowtail
Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Spicebush Swallowtail
Spicebush <i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush Swallowtail
Thistles <i>Cirsium</i> species	Painted Lady
Turtlehead <i>Chelone glabra</i>	Baltimore Checkerspot
<i>Viburnums</i>	Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin
Willows <i>Salix</i> species	Dreamy Duskywing, Striped Hairstreak, Mourning Cloak, Viceroy

Main Resources Consulted

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