



The glowworm



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March is arriving windy and warm in North Mississippi! That means it won't be very long at all before we'll see the early emerging insects. Now is the time to begin planning for upcoming gardening activities. Butterflies are in and butterfly gardens need some planning and research! For the beginner, consider which butterfly species you'd like to attract to your garden. Once that's done, research the plants which can be used to attract the critters. It might also be good to visit with experienced gardeners in the area to see which species are common during the summer. It would be easy to add more plants which will help them to increase in number. Some butterflies simply do not live in our area, so it might not be a good idea to plant plants which are attractive only to those. Some butterflies and moths will cycle on large trees, so a field trip around the neighborhood to determine the plants which are already available would help to make attracting butterflies easier.

One essential ingredient for butterfly gardens is SUNSHINE. Open sunny areas and plants which are adapted to full sun are important. Butterflies like all animals get into habits and some feed at one time of day while other species might feed at another, but they seldom select shaded areas. A mixed habitat which uses both short and tall plants provides variety to the 'flying flowers.'

Butterflies also need shelter – places where they can rest and get out of the wind. Some of the larger 'nectar source' bushes can serve as a resting and roosting area. Camouflage may also be important for the butterflies at times, as well. Some birds will feed actively on caterpillars and on adults. Thick hedges or even permanent structures (butterfly boxes) might serve as resting and hiding places for butterflies. Butterfly gardeners probably should NOT provide nesting boxes for birds, nor should bird feeders be located in the butterfly garden. I feed birds on one side of my property and butterfly garden on the other.

These unique animals also need access to bare soil. They prefer damp soil, so a mud puddle or shallow pool might help to provide a congregating area for butterflies. They not only need the

moisture, but will seek minerals from the soil. Bachelor or puddle clubs of butterflies often congregate in areas where soil is moist to feed on mineral salts to enhance their pheromone production.

The garden can be as small as a window box and as large as many acres, but if these simple principles and the correct plants are used, you'll get butterflies. Many of us get anxious and just hate to wait. For those who have this problem, there are some livestock practices which can be used. Some species of butterflies can be purchased, but a very effective stocking idea is to get to know other butterfly gardeners and get them to share eggs, caterpillars or even pupae. Many adult butterflies tend to return to the area where they emerged, if you provide a good larval source, they'll usually come back to it. You might also catch a mature female and cage it on a larval host plant for a few days. Give her sugar water to keep her energy up and she will lay eggs.

Many of the common butterflies will feed on herbs. Caraway, dill, parsley, fennel are host plants on which the caterpillars of swallowtails will feed. The table below gives some common Mississippi butterflies and the plants on which they live.

Butterfly	Larval host plant	Nectar plant
Eastern black swallowtail	dill, fennel, parsley	milkweed, thistle, ...
Spicebush swallowtail	spicebush, sassafras, bay	milkweed, thistle, ...
Pipevine swallowtail	Dutchman's pipe	thistle, butterfly bush, ...
Cloudless Sulphur	senna, partridge pea	lantana, hibiscus, daisy ...
Monarch	milkweed (<i>Asclepias sp</i>)	butterfly bush, lantana, ...
Queen	milkweed (<i>Asclepias sp</i>)	milkweed, daisies
Gray hairstreak	clover, vetch, oak ...	white clover, milkweed ...
Viceroy	willow, plum, cherry ...	rotting fruit, carrion, ...
Red-spotted purple	willow, poplar, cherry	rotting fruit, carrion, ...
Red Admiral	nettle, hops	rotting fruit, daisy, ...
Question mark	nettle, hops	rotting fruit, carrion, ...
Painted lady	daisy, thistle, hollyhock ...	thistle, dandelion, ...
Hackberry butterfly	hackberry	rotting fruit, carrion, ...
Gulf fritillary	passion flower (maypop)	lantana, composites ...
Buckeye	snapdragon, verbena	composites, dogbane ...
Comma	violet	rotting fruit, butterfly bush, ...

Almost all of the butterflies listed will nectar on butterfly bush, zinnias, and lantana. A gardener who only wants adults can mass these three plants and still see many butterflies, but to keep a steady flow and to see all the interaction, larval food plants should also be included in the garden.

Arrangement in the garden is important. Try a single color in one portion of the garden and another color in another part to see which ones are best. You'll also see bees, wasps, spiders and many other 'critters' in your garden.

Happy Buggin'

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Extension Entomologist

I've not requested a mail list upgrade on the *Gloworm* in quite some time but would really appreciate having any upgrades in addresses. I try to mail this to anybody who wants it, but some of the young people who received it in the past may have a new address – college. If that situation exists for your household, we'll keep sending it to you, but upgrade the new address, as well. We'll send it to both places. Just return this page with the new address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

You can email you address to me at MikeW@ext.msstate.edu

Bee Essay Contest

Our Mississippi Bee Essay Contest is complete for 2004. We had 27 contestants to submit essays this year. The subject was 'Swarming.' I learned some things by reading the essays. The new subject for 2005 will be announced in June.

Congratulations to

Nikki Boles – Attala County – 1st Place

Lydia Burns –Lauderdale County - 2nd Place

Sarah Miller – Oktibbeha County – 3rd Place

Justin Burger – Oktibbeha County – 4th Place

Chloe Davis – George County - 5th Place

Chelsea Holland – Tate County- 6th Place

Hannah Miller – Oktibbeha County – 7th Place

Beth Alexander –Newton County - 8th Place

Daniel Snyder – Copiah County - 9th Place

Ashley Henley –Newton County - 10th Place

State Contest Winners

For all the 4-H Entomology winners from 2003 check the 4-H Entomology WEB page –
<http://www.msstate.edu/Entomology/4-H/2003winners.html>

Linnaean Games

Linnaean teams need to get organized and started really soon. We will have a book of Linnaean Questions available by mid-March. Teams will still be required to submit 25 questions from the study material, but all contests will be derived from the Official Linnaean Questions booklet. Submitted questions will be incorporated into the official booklet for next year! **We have a commitment from Bayer CropScience for supporting the Games for 2004.**

4-H Entomology Camp

CAMP SESSIONS are finally set for 2004. Camp session 1 is set for June 20-24 at Plymouth Bluff, near Columbus, MS. The second camp is set for Tombigbee State Park, near Tupelo. We've already gotten reservations for both camps for 2004! Get yours in early!

