




# the butterfly effect

INVITE INSTANT COLOUR AND LIFE TO YOUR GARDEN BY INTRODUCING PLANTS THAT ATTRACT SOME OF THE MOST VIBRANT CREATURES ON EARTH - BUTTERFLIES

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There is something incredibly alluring about butterflies: their vibrant iridescence, whimsical dances and their intimate associations with nature. So it's no great surprise to find there is a growing number of gardeners who are deeply passionate about what is known as 'butterfly gardening', which is specifically aimed at creating an environment that attracts and nurtures butterflies.

This renewed interest comes at a time when some of Australia's 400-plus butterfly species are becoming endangered due to habitat disturbance or destruction. Butterfly gardening provides an opportunity to help some species persist in the sprawling urban environment and to ensure their role in nature continues.

Not only are butterflies beautiful, they also play an important function as pollinators, enabling plants to reproduce, and are a barometer for the health and diversity of natural ecologies. >

**green tip**

Try keeping a butterfly journal: photographing them is a great way of recording the biodiversity in your yard.



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“LOVE IS LIKE A BUTTERFLY, IT GOES WHERE IT PLEASES, AND IT PLEASES WHEREVER IT GOES”

~ Dolly Parton, singer-songwriter

**Get planting**

A combination of native plants for larval food and exotics for colour and nectar can help maintain local and regional biodiversity. Choose a variety of plants that flower continuously through the seasons (see suggestions at right). Butterflies are particularly drawn to red, orange, yellow, pink and purple flowers and favour those planted *en masse*.

**Best butterfly spot**

Gardens should be in full sun as butterflies are cold-blooded and like to bask in the sunshine. Butterflies hate the wind, so make sure there is adequate shelter by planting sturdy evergreens. As the delicate creatures cannot drink from running water, the best way to provide drinking water is to let puddles form in the garden so butterflies can land and sip safely.

**Butterfly no-nos**

Butterflies lay between 300 and 500 eggs and in most cases very few survive to adulthood. Help the survivors flourish by avoiding the use of pesticides in your garden. An alternative approach is to spot-treat pest insects with insecticidal soaps or oils, which leave no chemical residues on plants that may be harmful to caterpillars.

Once your butterfly garden is in place, it won't be long before your new visitors flutter to your back doorstep. "Butterflies are beautiful," says butterfly gardener Ray Archer. "They don't bite you or growl at you or pee or poo on you. And they bring a lot of peace into your life." 🍋



2

“THE BUTTERFLY COUNTS NOT MONTHS BUT MOMENTS, AND HAS TIME ENOUGH”

~ Rabindranath Tagore, Indian poet

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Painted lady butterflies, this one sharing an echinacea flower with a Bumble bee, are found throughout Australia except in the far north. **ABOVE:** 1 An adult Varied eggfly butterfly on a hot-pink pentas flower. This butterfly breeds in coastal areas of Queensland and the Northern Territory, but disperses across much of

eastern mainland Australia. 2 An adult Common Crow sucks the nectar out of a daisy. Also known as Oleander butterflies, they feed on a wide range of plants such as figs, *Nerium oleander* and Star jasmine. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Butterfly magnets include *Angophora hispida*; *Callistemon 'King's Park Special'*; Pentas; and Lavender.

*Butterfly kisses for your garden*

Ray Archer, a butterfly expert who runs the non-profit Queensland nursery Butterfly Plants for Poverty, recommends reserving a portion of your garden for plants that butterflies like. "Butterflies need nectar plants, such as pentas, which come in a range of vibrant colours," explains Ray. "Pentas flower heads are mushroom-shaped so are very easy for butterflies to stand on and sip the nectar. Butterfly eggs are laid on special food plants and when caterpillars hatch, they need quick and easy access to food." Find out more about Ray's charity work at [butterflyplantsforpoverty.org](http://butterflyplantsforpoverty.org) or butterflies in general at [boic.org.au](http://boic.org.au)

**AUSTRALIAN NATIVES:**

- ANGOPHORA
- BOTTLEBRUSH
- GERALDTON WAX
- GREVILLEA
- NATIVE WISTERIA
- SPEAR GRASS
- WATTLE
- WONGA WONGA VINE

**EXOTICS:**

- BUDDLEIA
- CITRUS
- COSMOS
- DILL
- FENNEL
- LAVENDER
- MILKWEED
- PENTAS
- SCARLET PASSION FLOWER
- THYME



PHOTOGRAPHY 1: BOIC/HONGMING KAN. 2: BOIC/ROSS KENDALL. RIGHT: JPD MEDIA/JAMIE DURIE