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# UC MASTER GARDENERS OF PLACER COUNTY

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## Plants for Foothill Butterfly Gardens

Excerpted from: <http://butterfly.ucdavis.edu/doc/garden/foothills>

### **Native Nectar Plants**

1. Lemonade Bush, *Rhus trilobata* (spring)
2. Coyotebrush, *Baccharis pilularis* and var. *consanguinea* (autumn)
3. Dogbane or Indian Hemp, *Apocynum* species (late spring-summer)
4. Milkweeds, *Asclepias* species (spring-fall)
5. Goldenrods, *Solidago* species (late summer-fall)
6. *Haplopappus arboreus* (late summer-fall)
7. Rabbitbrush, *Chrysothamnus* species (late summer-fall)
8. Aster species (late summer-fall)
9. Yerba Santa, *Eriodictyon* (spring-early summer)
10. Coffeberry, *Rhamnus* species (late spring-early summer)
11. Buckeye, *Aesculus californica* (late spring-early summer)
12. Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis* (summer)
13. *Brodiaeas* in the broad sense, including *Triteleia* (spring)
14. Native Umbels, e.g. *Tauschia*, *Angelica* (spring-early summer)
15. Coyotemint or Western Pennyroyal, *Monardella* species (summer)
16. Giant Hyssop, *Agastache nepetoides* (midsummer-early fall)
17. Lilies, *Lilium* species (midsummer; mainly for Swallowtails)
18. Pussy Paws, *Calyptridium umbellata* (spring)
19. Wild Buckwheats, *Eriogonum* species (spring-fall)
20. Sorry, butterflies are NOT attracted to Onagraceae (except Swallowtails may visit *Zauschneria*), most Rosaceae (including *Spiraea*), Poppies, Nightshades, and the vast majority of showy native annuals!

### **Recommended Non-Native Nectar Plants**

#### **Shrubs:**

1. Butterfly Bush, *Buddleia* (purples and pinks)(summer-fall)
2. Lilac, *Syringa* (spring)
3. Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis* (all year)
4. Lavender, *Lavandula* (all year)
5. Pride-of-Madeira, *Echium fastuosum* (spring, freeze-sensitive)
6. Waxleaf Privet, *Ligustrum* (spring-fall)
7. *Escallonia* species (all year)
8. *Abelia* (spring-fall)
9. *Weigelia* (spring-summer)
10. *Lantana* (especially pinks and purples and orange/yellow two-tone)(blooms all year, freeze-sensitive)

#### **Ground Covers:**

1. *Lippia* (spring-fall)
2. *Gazania* (plain yellow flowers best; all year)

### Perennials:

1. *Sedum spectabile* (summer-fall)
2. Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare* (early summer)
3. Onions, Scallions, Leeks; *Allium* species (summer)
4. Gayfeather, *Liatris* (late summer-fall)
5. Joe-Pye Weed, *Eupatorium* (summer-fall)
6. *Verbena* species (spring-fall)
7. Alfalfa, *Medicago sativa* (summer-fall)

### Annuals:

1. Marigolds (*Tagetes*, *Bidens*, etc.) (summer-fall)
  2. Zinnia (summer-fall)
  3. Vetches, *Vicia* (spring-early summer)
  4. Pincushion Flower, *Scabiosa* (may perennial) (summer-fall)
- Sorry, Pot-Marigold (*Calendula*) and Chinese Aster (*Callistephus*) are not attractive to butterflies. Nor are Camellias, Gardenias, Peonies and most non-native bulbs!

### Larval Host Plants for Native Butterflies

1. California Pipevine or Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia californica*): sole larval host of the [Pipevine Swallowtail](#) (*Battus philenor*).
2. Bush Monkey Flower (*Mimulus* or *Diplacus aurantiacus*); shrubby and perennial *Penstemon* and *Keckiella*; Bee Plant (*Scrophularia*): hosts of the [Chalcedon or Variable Checkerspot](#) (*Euphydryas chalcedona*). All of these plus *Lippia*, Plantains (*Plantago*), and garden Snapdragon are also hosts of the [Buckeye](#) (*Junonia coenia*).
3. Pearly and other Everlastings (*Gnaphalium*, *Antennaria*, *Anaphalis*): [West Virginia Lady](#) (*Vanessa virginiensis*).
4. Wild Buckwheats (*Eriogonum* species): All perennial and shrubby species are worth a try, though the large chaparral species from southern California are unlikely to be used. Wild Buckwheats serve as both hosts and nectar sources for several species of Blues, Coppers and Hairstreaks and the [Mormon Metalmark](#) (*Apodemia mormo*).
5. Native perennial vetches and sweetpeas (*Vicia* and *Lathyrus*, but NOT the introduced day-glo pink *L. latifolius*) and most perennial and shrubby Lupines, including the common Bush Lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), are hosts for several Blues, some Hairstreaks, and the [Northern Cloudy-Wing](#) (*Thorybes pylades*).
6. Milkweeds (*Asclepias*, all species): [Monarch](#) (*Danaus plexippus*).
7. Native members of the Carrot Family, Apiaceae (Umbelliferae), including Biscuitroot (*Lomatium*); *Angelica*; *Tauschia*; Yampah (*Perideridia*), etc., as well as naturalized species such as Sweet Fennel or "anise" (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*): [Anise Swallowtail](#) (*Papilio zelicaon*).
8. Wild Lilacs (*Ceanothus*, all species): [California Tortoiseshell](#) (*Nymphalis californica*), [Echo Blue](#) (*Celastrina ladon echo*), [Sepia Hairstreak](#) (*Satyrium saepium*), [Grinnell's Duskywing](#) (*Erynnis pacuvius*), [Pale Swallowtail](#) (*Papilio eurymedon*) (*Papilio eurymedon* – also eats Coffeberry, *Rhamnus*).
9. Deer Weed (*Lotus scoparius*); other Lotus, both annual (e.g. *L. purshianus*) and perennial (*L. crassifolius*, *L. corniculatus*): [Eastern Tailed Blue](#) (*Everes comyntas*), [Acmon Blue](#) (*Plebejus acmon*), [Persius Duskywing](#) (*Erynnis persius*), [Northern Cloudy-Wing](#) (*Thorybes pylades*), [Silver-Spotted Skipper](#) (*Epargyreus clarus*) —the last two only on *L. crassifolius*.
10. California Wild Indigo or Lead Plant, *Amorpha californica* and other *Amorpha* species: [California Dogface](#) (*Zerene eurydice*), our State Insect. The [Silver-Spotted Skipper](#) (*Epargyreus clarus*) also breeds on Wild Indigo and on the introduced Black and New Mexico Locust (*Robinia* species).

11. Willows (*Salix* species, EXCEPT Weeping Willow, *S. babylonica*): [Lorquin's Admiral \(\*Limenitis lorquini\*\)](#), and [Willow Hairstreak \(\*Satyrium sylvinus\*\)](#). The [Mourning Cloak \(\*Nymphalis antiopa\*\)](#) accepts Weeping Willow as well, along with soft-leaved species of Elm and Hackberry.
12. Oaks (*Quercus*, all, including exotic species): [California Sister \(\*Adelpha bredowii\*\)](#), California and [Gold-Hunter's Hairstreaks \(\*Satyrium californica\* and \*S. auretteorum\*\)](#), [Propertius](#) and [Sad or Mournful Duskywings \(\*Erynnis propertius\* and \*E. tristis\*\)](#). The [Golden Oak Hairstreak \(\*Habrodais grunus\*\)](#) uses only *Quercus chrysolepis*, although chinquapin (*Chrysolepis chrysophylla*) is used in Oregon.
13. Stinging Nettle (*Urtica*): [Satyr Anglewing \(\*Polygonia satyrus\*\)](#), [Red Admiral \(\*Vanessa atalanta\*\)](#), [West Coast Lady \(\*Vanessa annabella\*\)](#), [Milbert's Tortoiseshell \(\*Nymphalis milberti\*\)](#).
14. Other butterfly hosts worth trying are:
15. native bunchgrasses: various skippers)
16. both native and introduced (be careful!) thistles (*Cirsium*, *Carduus*, *Silybum*): [Painted Lady \(\*Vanessa cardui\*\)](#), [Mylitta Crescent \(\*Phyciodes mylitta\*\)](#)
17. bush or chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus*): [Large White Skipper \(\*Heliopetes ericetorum\*\)](#)
18. Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus*): [Mountain Mahogany Hairstreak \(\*Satyrium tetra\*\)](#)
19. Jewel Flowers (*Streptanthus* species) and Rock Cresses (*Arabis* species): various Whites, Marbles and Orange-Tips
20. Bleeding-Heart (*Dicentra formosa*): [Clodius Parnassian \(\*Parnassius clodius\*\)](#) – in cool, moist canyon or forest sites only).

### **Weeds that Butterflies (but not your neighbors) Love**

**All of these are butterfly hosts as indicated:**

1. Mallows, *Malva* spp.: [Painted Lady \(\*Vanessa cardui\*\)](#), [Gray Hairstreak \(\*Strymon melinus\*\)](#), [Common Checkered Skipper \(\*Pyrgus communis\*\)](#)
2. Dock, *Rumex* spp.: [Purplish Copper \(\*Lycaena helloides\*\)](#), [Great Copper \(\*Lycaena xanthoides\*\)](#)
3. Turkey Mullein, *Eremocarpus setigerus*: [Gray Hairstreak \(\*Strymon melinus\*\)](#)
4. Amaranth Pigweed, *Amaranthus* species: [Common Sooty Wing \(\*Pholisora catullus\*\)](#) (now rare!)
5. Tumbleweed, Russian Thistle, *Salsola* species: [Pygmy Blue \(\*Brephidium exile\*\)](#)
6. Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), Dallis Grass (*Paspalum* spp.), Johnson Grass (*Sorghum halepense*), Harding Grass (*Phalaris* spp.), Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa* spp.): a variety of skippers!
7. "Yard grass", Prostrate Knotweed, *Polygonum aviculare*: [Acmon Blue \(\*Plebejus acmon\*\)](#), [Purplish Copper \(\*Lycaena helloides\*\)](#)

Poison Oak is not a butterfly plant.

THIS LIST IS NOT EXCLUSIVE! EXPERIMENT!

There is another version of this document available for gardening in the Sacramento

Valley. [Information Center for the Environment \(ICE\) University of California, Davis](#)

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