

Helping
Carolinians In
The Piedmont
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening &
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment

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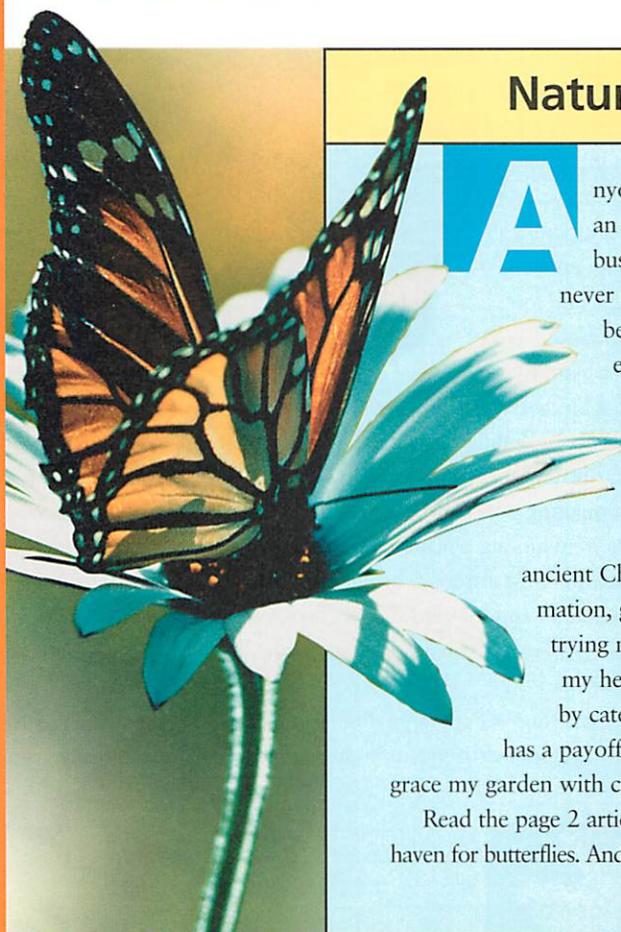
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Nature's Delightful Gifts

Anyone who gardens knows its delights. A stately tree, an explosion of colorful blossoms, the hustle and bustle of tiny animals. A garden is a busy place, and never completely ours. Take time to sit still and watch bees and ladybugs at work in an ever-changing environment. These, along with other insects, are beneficial and a reason to take extra care when using pesticides. Be sure to check with your county Cooperative Extension Center on the safe use of garden chemicals.

My favorite garden visitors are butterflies. The ancient Chinese symbols of joy, they also symbolize transformation, growth and new opportunities. They can bring trying moments, though, particularly when I walk into my herb garden to find my parsley stripped of all leaves by caterpillars. To me, though, this minor inconvenience has a payoff when the transformation takes place and butterflies grace my garden with color, movement and life.

Read the page 2 article to learn what to plant to build your garden into a haven for butterflies. And take time this spring to enjoy nature's restorative gifts.

— *The Editor*



'Chindo' Viburnum Is Excellent Evergreen

A screening plant that will grab your attention, exhibit an elegant sheen and provide a perfect backdrop to create a showplace for plants is the 'Chindo' viburnum.

This N. C. Association of Nurserymen Raulston Selection Plant is a good choice for the gardener who is looking for a strong, healthy plant that grows quickly to a height of 10 to 15 feet. 'Chindo'

viburnum is a broadleaf evergreen shrub with white spring flowers and bright red fruit in the fall. It is a good substitute for Photinia.

This vigorous grower likes sun or shade and wet or dry soils. You can't ask for more from a plant that makes a beautiful hedge. Visit the J.C. Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh for a look at this proven winner.

Stephen Greer



Create a Sanctuary for Butterflies

Having a butterfly garden is like having the Discovery Channel in your backyard. These ephemeral creatures provide a window to the soul of gardening. Their erratic movements and stunning colors add a special charm to the home landscape.

Why do butterflies come to our gardens? Research conducted in the Carolinas has revealed that butterflies are attracted to flowers, specifically the petal color and nectar volume.

Another incentive to these Lepidoptera beauties is an enticing flower shape and long blooming period.

The first plant to purchase for luring butterflies in your direction is the butterfly bush, *Buddleia davidii*. The buddleia is a four-star restaurant to these insects. Butterflies have discriminating tastes and have definite preferences even among a plant species. From observation, the most attractive buddleias are the reddish-flowered varieties followed by the white-colored cultivars which actually produce more nectar seasonally.

"In my own garden I see large differences in the butterfly species that frequent buddleia vari-

eties," says Jim Nottke, a Forsyth County Master Gardener and butterfly enthusiast. "Swallowtails prefer 'Pink Delight,' silver-spotted skippers prefer the white-flowered plants and the buckeye butterflies like the 'Sungold' almost exclusively."

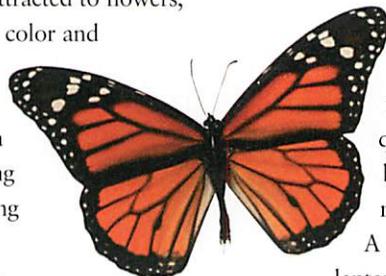
Most experts agree that there are a few common rules for attracting butterflies to your garden.

First, choose a location that is in full sun, as these insects need the warming rays to propel them in flight. Plant similar colored flowers in groupings rather than mixed bouquets. Although buddleia is a virtual catnip to butterflies, there are many other suitable nectar-bearing plants to include in a garden.

A partial list of these plants include heliotrope, lantana, milkweed, mint, bee balm, butterfly weed, salvias, marigold, pentas, verbenas and zinnias.

No matter how many plants you add to the landscape, these insects will ultimately disappear if there is no food for the larvae, or caterpillars. Plants to feed their young include parsley, fennel, wild cherries, asters, milkweeds, passion vine, verbenas, snapdragons and saffras.

Emerging butterflies will need a place to drink and a few stones for basking. A pool of water, a birdbath or just a saucer of damp sand will suffice for moisture. **Toby Bost**



bee balm



buddleia davidii



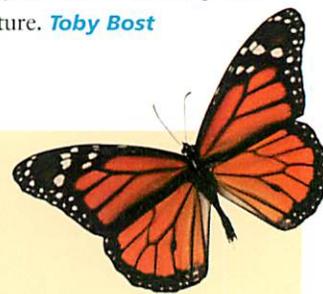
Butterfly Books and Other Resources

To learn more about butterfly sanctuaries, check these sources:

- Cooperative Extension Center in your county.
- The Carolina Butterfly Society, which is open to everyone with a dedication to butterfly watching and gardening. Write to CBS, 4209 Bramlet Place, Greensboro, NC 27407. Individual membership is \$10.
- In Charlotte, visit the Nature Museum's indoor butterfly garden (704) 372-6261.

Look for these books:

- *The Butterfly Book* by Stokes and Williams (Little Brown & Company).
- *Butterflies Through Binoculars* by Jeffrey Glassberg (Oxford University Press).
- *The N.C. Gardener's Guide* by Toby Bost (Cool Springs Press) which contains information on general landscape gardening in our area, especially plant selection.



gardentalk

"If things never changed, there wouldn't be butterflies."

— Anonymous



Q&A Could you give me some guidelines on managing clay soil?

Southern soils differ from the Midwest, where glaciers scoured topsoil from the entire Hudson Bay and deposited it in your front yard. Western soils vary but at least have nutrients. Our nutrients have leached away during 100,000 years of rain-fall. Still, you can cope with clay.

First, add organic matter. Use anything except peat moss. Peat moss holds water and our clay soils hold enough water already. Adjust pH per a soil test. Usually the pH is

low. If it is not, get a second opinion. Lime raises the pH. Sulfur lowers the pH.

Add nutrients. Many local soils have low phosphorus levels. Tilling or aerating is critical for compacted soils. Even in soils that haven't been compacted, tilling provides a temporary benefit. Never till wet soil. If the soil sticks to a shovel or hoe, it is too wet. If the soil barely sticks, the dirt clod may be fist size, but I have seen dirt clods 10 to 15 acres in size. *David Goforth*

Tropical Plants Make Children's Gardening Tantalizing

Want to add a fun, tropical tone to the garden with a project the kids will love? A few tubs or containers of giant, leafy plants and vivid tropical colors can transform an entryway and keep the interest of younger gardeners. These plants thrive in containers.

Cannas – For non-stop flowers from July till frost, try canna with its distinctive tropical foliage of large brown or green leaves and gigantic red, orange, pink or yellow flowers. To plant the canna root, lay it on its side, bury 1 inch deep in the soil. Cannas love full sun and hot weather.

Lilies – Elegant cultured lilies love to be potted. For a container 12 inches wide, plant three lilies, positioning each about 4 inches below the soil surface. The early- to mid-summer blooming Asiatic lilies do well, as do the later-blooming Orientals. Full sun or partial shade.

Caladiums – Eye-catching foliage in soft, muted shades of green and white or rich tones of hot fuchsia and soft shades of green and pink, caladiums deliver an unbeatable luxuriance of lushness and tropical color. Place in partial or full shade; keep moist in hottest weather.

Bulbs such as dahlias, gladioli and tuberous hybrid begonias also are good choices for children's gardening.

Carl A. Matyac

ENVIRO-TIP

The Best Pest Control Is Prevention

Pest control for homeowners should begin and end with one practice: prevention. When evaluating a pest problem, ask yourself if some other stress factor is inviting the problem. The answer may lead you to take this common-sense approach to control:

- Remove water sources. All pests need water to survive. Fix plumbing leaks and prevent water accumulation. Empty houseplant trays and plan watering so that foliage dries promptly.

- Remove the pests' shelter. Remove and destroy diseased plants, tree and shrub prunings, and fallen or mummified fruit that may harbor or overwinter disease.
- Remove breeding sites. Again, sanitation is the key. Destroy infected materials and remember standing water is the perfect breeding site for mosquitoes.
- Minimize plant stress. Plant at the optimum time of the year. Mulch to reduce weed competition and maintain even soil temperature and moisture.

Provide supplemental water during drought periods and fertilize at appropriate rates and times.

- Use preventive cultural practices. Select disease-resistant cultivars. Utilize companion plantings to exploit the insect repellent properties of certain plants. Use trap crops to lure pests away from crops you wish to protect. Practice crop rotation, diversification and optimal plant spacing. Make sure your soil is well-drained. Sanitize pruners between plants. *Royce Hardin*





Garden Spot

The McGill Rose

Garden is a living work of art nestled in an intimate urban setting near uptown Charlotte. Stroll through a collection of over 1,000 roses but don't forget your camera, as you'll want to remember each and every variety which will delight your senses.

This garden was recently declared an All American Rose Selection public garden which is quite an honor. The AARS is a nonprofit association of rose growers dedicated to rose research and promotion. Every AARS winning rose completes an extensive two-year trial program where it is judged on everything from disease resistance to flower production to color to fragrance. If you see a rose that's not named but numbered, it's likely one of these being tested.

Join the garden's Sweethearts Club and a rose will be planted in honor of your sweetheart. The garden is open Monday to Wednesday during spring and summer from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m and is located at 940 N. Davidson Street in Charlotte, NC; (704) 333-6497. *Karen Neill*

Gardening in May

What to Fertilize

- Fertilize summer-flowering plants like crape myrtle, butterfly bush and rose-of-sharon this month.
- Do not forget to sidedress or fertilize your vegetables 6 to 8 weeks after germination.

What to Plant

- Continue setting out summer annuals.
- Set out eggplant, pepper, tomato and sweet potato plants.
- Plant summer vegetable seeds.

What to Prune

- Begin pinching your chrysanthemums and continue through mid-July.
- Do not cut back spring bulb foliage until it turns yellow and brown.

Pest Outlook

- Check the following landscape shrubs for the following insect pests: bagworms on arborvitae and juniper; lace bugs on azalea and pyracantha; leafminer on boxwood; tea scale on camellia; aphids on crape myrtle; scale on euonymus; and spider mites on hemlock and juniper. Call your county Cooperative Extension Center with your questions.
 - Continue with rose spray program for black spot.
 - Keep spraying your tree fruits and bunch grapes with a fungicide program.

Lawn Care

- Fertilize warm season grasses like Bermuda and zoysia this month. Do not fertilize tall fescue.
- Mowing heights for your lawn are important. Cut tall fescue at three inches, zoysia at one inch, hybrid Bermuda at 3/4 inch and centipede grass at one inch. *John Vining*



The *Successful Gardener* provides timely, research-based horticultural information to help Carolinians make wise landscape investment decisions and gain greater enjoyment from their lawns and gardens. The newsletter is part of an overall horticulture program which includes Extension's Successful Gardener Workshop Series in various counties throughout the Piedmont region. We publish monthly except January and July. Comments concerning Successful Gardener may be sent to:

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Ask for Extension's Successful Gardener at one of your local garden centers each month!

For a list of garden centers where you can find Successful Gardener, please call (704) 336-2561 or look on our Home Page at <http://mecklenburg.ces.state.nc.us/>

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Tune in to "Making It Grow!" – a gardening show featuring Extension agents from the Carolinas. Saturdays, 1 p.m. WTVI 42, Charlotte

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