Lifestyle of the Fluttering Set
Most babies look a lot like their parents—just smaller. Not butterflies. They have four completely different life stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.

During the larval stage (often called caterpillars), the budding butterflies mostly eat leaves—and sometimes from just one plant or group of plants. Adults are often less fussy, but still have their preferences. Therefore the kind of plants in your garden will also determine the kind of butterflies in your garden.

Adulst: Actual lifespan can vary, depending on species and weather conditions. However, once the butterfly emerges and mates, the female lays eggs and the cyce begins again.

Egg: 5-10 days. The female butterfly will attach the eggs to plants that will serve as food for the growing larvae.

Larvae: 2-4 weeks. The larva, or caterpillar, has a hearty appetite for leaves, often of a very specific plant or group of plants. As the larva eats, it outgrows its skin and sheds it for a new one. This will happen four to six times.

Pupa: About 10-15 days (in warm weather—but many species spend the winter in this form, emerging as butterflies in the spring). The pupa or chrysalis is a very quiet stage during which the caterpillar shape dissolves and the butterfly shape is formed. The pupae often attach themselves to twigs or leaves and may take on the color of the surrounding plant material.

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Creating Butterfly Gardens

Butterflies in the Garden

Gardens are special places—full of color and fragrance. With just a little planning, they can also be full of movement and life, inviting creatures to join the beautiful collection of plants. Butterflies add welcome and elegant flashes of color to almost any garden—and you can easily accommodate them in your own backyard.

A sunny spot that offers some protection from the wind is a good place to start. Then begin planning a collection of plants that grow well in your area and will provide nectar throughout the season. To be a full-service butterfly hotel, your garden will also need food for caterpillars—plants which may be trees or weeds or may not prove as decorative as others in your garden. Homes and schools near woods or meadows get the edge here—but even urban dwellers may find ways to add some of these plants to the garden.

A little attention to moisture (many butterflies like to drink from puddles or moist areas) and insecticides (just say “no”) is also appreciated.

How well do you know Butterflies?
True or False:
1) Butterflies lived at the same time as dinosaurs
2) Butterflies, and their cousins the moths, are the largest group of insects
3) Humans can see more colors than butterflies
4) The white “eye spots” on butterfly wings are created by pockets of light-reflecting air
5) A butterfly’s entire body is covered with scales, even their feet
6) Butterflies have six feet—and they can taste with them
7) Most butterflies migrate to escape the winter

To be a full-service butterfly hotel, your...
Choosing Nectar Plants: To provide for season-long butterfly visits, choose a mix of nectar-rich species, with blooming times that run from spring to fall. Both annuals and perennials are possibilities. Remember to plan for the unique height (taller ones go in back) and color combinations that each type of plant will add to the garden. Below is a partial list of plants that do well in many areas of California, but check with your local nursery or Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener for the best choices in your area.

I. **Annuals**
- Ageratum (Ageratum Houstonianum)
- Cosmos (Cosmos bipinnatus)
- Lantana (Lantana camara)
- Lunaria (Lunaria annua)
- Marigold (Tagetes patula)
- Nicotiana spp.
- Pentas (Pentas lanceolata)
- Petunia (Petunia hybrida)
- Statice (Limonium sinuatum)
- Verbena (Verbena spp.)
- Zinnia (Zinnia elegans)

II. **Perennials**
- Aster (Aster Michaelmas Daisy (Aster spp.)
- Bee balm (Monarda didyma)
- Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia spp.)
- Butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa)
- Cape Plumbago (Plumbago auriculata)
- Catnip (Nepeta mussinii)
- Ceanothus (Ceanothus spp.)
- Chives (Allium schoenoprasum)
- Coreopsis (Coreopsis spp.)
- Gaillardia/Blanket flower (Gaillardia grandiflora)
- Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia)
- Liatris (Liatris spp.)
- Phlox (Phlox spp.)
- Purple Coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)
- Scabiosa (Scabiosa atropurpurea)
- Yarrow (Achillea filipendulina)

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**California Caterpillar Cuisine (aka foods for butterfly larvae)**

Aspen, cottonwood (Populus spp.)
Birch (Betula spp.)
Blueberry (Vaccinium spp.)
Cabbage, broccoli (Brassica spp.)
Cherry (Prunus spp.)
Citrus (Citrus spp.)
Dogwood (Cornus spp.)
Elm (Ulmus spp.)
False indigo (Amorpha spp.)
False nettle (Boehmeria spp.)
Grasses, sedges
Hackberry ( Celtis spp.)
Knotweed (Polygonum spp.)
Lupine (Lupinus spp.)
Mallow (Malva spp.)
Marigold (Tagetes spp.)
Meadowsweet (Spiraea spp.)
Milkweed (Asclepias spp.)
Nettle (Urtica spp.)
Oak (Quercus spp.)
Parsley (Petroselinum crispum)
Passionflower (Passiflora spp.)
Plantain (Plantago spp.)
Snapdragon (Antirrhinum spp.)
Sorrel, dock (Rumex spp.)
Sweet fennel (Foeniculum vulgare)
Thistle (Cirsium spp.)
Vetch (Vicia spp.)
Willow (Salix spp.)
Winter cress (Barbara spp.)

**Some of California’s Many Butterfly Species**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Favorite Larvae Foods:</th>
<th>Adult Food:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anise Swallowtail</td>
<td>Sweet fennel, citrus trees</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Tiger Swallowtail</td>
<td>Aspens, polars, willows, alders, ashes</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkered White</td>
<td>Mustards</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Orange Tip</td>
<td>Mustards</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa Sulphur</td>
<td>Alfalfa, vetches, clover</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog Face</td>
<td>Indigo bush, prairie clover</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple Lily</td>
<td>Docks, knotweeds</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mormon Metalmark</td>
<td>Wild buckwheat</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown Elfin</td>
<td>Blueberry, bearberry</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gray Hairstreak</td>
<td>Legumes, mallows, others</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silver Blue</td>
<td>Dogwood, wild cherry</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Tailed Blue</td>
<td>Lupine, other legumes</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snout Butterfly</td>
<td>Vetches, other legumes</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mourning Cloak</td>
<td>Hackberry</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly weed</td>
<td>Willows, aspens, elms, birch, hackberry</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly bush (Buddleia spp.)</td>
<td>Nettles</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marigold (Tagetes spp.)</td>
<td>Plantains, snapdragons</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen, cottonwood (Populus spp.)</td>
<td>Thistles, composites, hollyhocks, borage</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch (Betula spp.)</td>
<td>Nettles</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberry (Vaccinium spp.)</td>
<td>Mallows, nettles</td>
<td>Nectar, dungeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage, broccoli (Brassica spp.)</td>
<td>Oaks</td>
<td>Nectar, fruit, pudding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry (Prunus spp.)</td>
<td>Willows, aspens, cottonwoods, chokecherry</td>
<td>Nectar/puddling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus (Citrus spp.)</td>
<td>Grasses</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dogwood (Cornus spp.)</td>
<td>Milkweeds</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elm (Ulmus spp.)</td>
<td>Milkweeds</td>
<td>Nectar</td>
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*Hold that Hoo!*

Even the much maligned chandelle ( *Tragopogon officinalis*) can have a place in a butterfly garden offering both food for butterflies and a great excuse for those who haven’t found the time to discourage them.

*However the Michaelmas daisy ( *Aster hybridus*) is also very attractive to butterflies—and to most onlookers as well.*