

YARD & GARDEN REPORT

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Flying colors

Butterflies carry happiness upon their wings. Their gentle, fluttering movements bring smiles to our faces and sparkle to our flower gardens.

Besides the well-known monarch butterfly, over 160 different butterflies fly in North Dakota (*page 2*).

It's easy to attract butterflies—just give them what they want. Hans Christian Anderson, the famous author of fairy tales, once wrote, “Just living is not enough,” said the butterfly, “one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower.” That's not too hard.

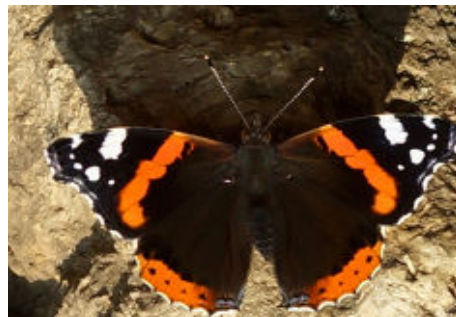
Select a sunny site that is sheltered from our harsh prairie winds.

Butterflies love to sunbathe. They fly easier when their bodies have warmed to 85 to 100 degrees. Create a warm resting spot for them by placing dark rocks in the garden.

Butterflies need water. Puddles of water provide the hydration, salt and minerals needed for health and successful breeding.

Limit pesticide use to an absolute minimum. Chemicals that kill insect pests will also kill butterflies.

Feed your butterflies. They need leaves to eat while they are caterpillars. Popular choices include birch, butterfly bush, oak, hackberry, plum, sweet mockorange, viburnum and willow. Caterpillars also enjoy clover and Kentucky bluegrass in the lawn, aster and hollyhock in the flower bed, and dill and parsley from the herb garden.



Figs. 1–3. Canadian tiger swallowtail feeds on nectar of lantana; red admiral casts its shadow while basking on rocks; swallowtails gather minerals from soil.

Select different flowers to make nectar available to adults from spring through fall. Butterflies are generally attracted to purple, orange, yellow and red flowers. Popular selections include blazing star, butterfly bush, phlox, cleome, coneflower, sedum, goldenrod, cosmos, dianthus, petunia and zinnia. Don't forget milkweed—it's essential for monarchs.

For more information, download the NDSU publication *Butterfly Gardening in North Dakota*.

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