Three Host Plants That Will Bring Seven Butterflies to Your Garden

Host or Larval Plant:
Butterflies choose to lay their eggs on or near plants that the caterpillars will eat. Each species has a narrow range of plants that its caterpillar phase will be nourished by. These plants supply certain chemicals necessary for the growth on the caterpillars. The host or larval plant is simply a plant that is eaten by the caterpillar.

Nectar Plants:
A plant that attracts adult butterflies by supplying nectar. These plants may vary in size, color, fragrance, and shape of their flowers; but all have nectar that may be sipped by the adult. A nectar plant is not chewed by the adult.

Three Host Plants

- Southern Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa)
- Corky stemmed Passionflower (Passiflora suberosa)
- Bahama Cassia (Senna mexicana chapmanii)

Seven Butterflies

- Monarch
- Queen
- Julia
- Gulf Fritillary
- Zebra Longwing
- Orange-barred Sulphur
- Cloudless Sulphur
Butterfly Garden Tips

• Place in a sunny, low-traffic area.
• Provide nectar plants.
• Include larval host plants for butterflies that you see in your area or ones you would like to attract.
• Make sure there are larger plants or a windbreak for shelter (north side of garden).
• Provide water source for drinking or a damp area for males to extract salts.
• Place flat rocks in sunny places for butterflies to warm themselves.

Maintaining a Butterfly Garden

• Do not use pesticides in your garden.
• They will kill your butterflies. Use a strong jet or water or hand pick other garden pests.
• Choose natural organic or slow-release fertilizers with a low phosphorous level for fertilizing your plants.
• Mulch at least 3-4 inches deep to decrease weeds, but stay 4-12 inches from the stems to prevent stem rot.

If you are interested in butterflies, these references can help:

• On Line at the University of Florida http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu
• Butterfly Gardening in Florida¹, http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW05700.pdf

Books

• Florida Butterfly Gardening, by Minno, Marc C. and Maria Minno, 199, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida


Or if you have garden questions E-Mail mastergardener@broward.org

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