

How to Establish Butterfly/ Pollinator Garden?

Establish a Butterfly or Pollinator Garden

- Choose flowering plants that will attract butterflies (Nectar plants for adult butterflies, food plants for caterpillars and plants that are common in your region)
- Evaluate your garden site
- Plan a garden that will create more butterflies

- Think of gardens that are easy to handle

Sunny Location

Locate your garden where it receives amount of sun exposure. Insects such as butterflies are cold-blooded and depend on the sun to warm their bodies. Plants on which butterflies and pollinators depend generally grow better in full sun (six or more hours of sunshine per day).

Nectar and Pollen Sources

Pollinators and butterflies feed on nectar and pollen from flowers on trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals in gardens. An effective pollinator habitat should provide pollen and nectar sources throughout the growing season and offer a variety of flower shapes and sizes. Flowers are planted in groups to increase the likelihood of butterflies and pollinators finding and choosing a place for a feeding stop. Plants that

are native to the country are preferred for they produce large quantity nectar and pollen, are adapted to soils and climate, require less maintenance and attract more pollinators.



Caterpillar of *Papilio demodocus* on *Citrus limon*

Table 1. Nectar Plants in the museum garden for butterflies and pollinators.

Flowering plants	Lantana, Milkweed, Lavender, Madagascar trumpet, Bleeding heart	Ixora, Verbena, Aster, Bluumbago,	Marigold, Pentas, Cosmos, Golden Rosella,
Trees	Crepe jasmine, Lucky nut, Scarlet-bush		
Shrubs	Bouganvillea, Lantana, Ixora	Bleeding heart,	

Larval Host Plants

Host plants are necessary for the butterflies and moths to complete their life cycle. They are places where butterflies lay their eggs and the caterpillars eat. Different species of butterflies use different host plants so; the garden should contain host plants for species of butterflies that are common in our area. For example, some butterfly caterpillars requires milkweeds such as common milkweed or butterfly milkweed in the garden.

Moisture

Pollinators and butterflies need water like other animals. Create an area for puddling where butterflies gather and get some minerals and water. Change the water in open container two to three times per week to prevent mosquito breeding.

Shelter

Small trees and shrubs will shelter your garden from wind. Shelter help butterflies to hide from predators. Shelter acts as source of food for caterpillars.

Planting, Establishment and Caring

Butterfly and pollinator habitats can be of all sizes and shapes. Adding nectar and caterpillar food plants such as milkweeds to the garden or landscape can be done as part of a new planting or as an addition to an existing garden. Host plants and nectar plants can be established as plants in pots, small starts (plugs) or from seed though seeding is more cost-effective for large areas. Potted plants and plugs are a good method for quick establishment for small areas.



A typical butterfly garden at Museum and House of Culture, National Museum of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.

Once a site is selected, remove existing plant debris or vegetation such as sod and weeds. Follow good gardening practices, including plant spacing, planting depth, irrigation (especially when plants are young and getting started), and mulching (for weed control and moisture conservation).

For best results, more diversity, and a more-typical urban landscape aesthetic should include perennials and annuals to provide color, interest, quick results, and season-long bloom.

Avoid pesticides as they are the most dangerous

to pollinators. The use of herbicides can also be detrimental to the insects. Do not spray plants that are in bloom and use systemic insecticides with caution as the insecticide may be present in pollen and nectar of plants with roots growing in the treated area.

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