Butterflies Found in Central Virginia

You can typically see butterflies in Central Virginia in the spring when the temperature reaches 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and some species linger through late fall. Butterflies hibernate or migrate in winter.

Swallowtails (Papilionidae)
Tiger Swallowtail and Zebra Swallowtail
Large, striking butterflies; males have elongated tails on their hind wings.
The Tiger Swallowtail is the state insect of Virginia. It is one of the most common butterflies in the Eastern United States.

Milkweed Butterflies (Danainae)
Monarch
Subfamily of Nymphalidae; Caterpillars feed only on milkweeds.

Whites and Yellows (Pieridae)
White Cabbage and Sulphurs
Mostly white or yellow. The name “butterfly” probably originated with this family.

Gossamer-wing Butterflies (Lycaenidae)
American Copper, Gray Hairstreak and Common Blue
Small and brightly colored, sometimes with a metallic gloss.

Brush-Footed Butterflies (Nymphalidae)
Fritillaries, Question Mark, Red Admiral and Viceroy
Appears to have only four legs; first pair of legs are very small and brush-like.

Skippers (Hesperiidae)
Silver-spotted Skipper, Hayhurst’s Scallopwing and Duskyies
Orange, brown or charcoal; small with short fat bodies and rapid, skipping flight.

Maymont’s Gardens & Arboretum

Maymont’s 100 acres feature 12 gardens, some from the Dooley era as well as more recent additions.

Italian Garden
Japanese Garden
Marie’s Butterfly Trail
Cactus Garden
Carriage House Garden
Daylily and Daffodil Garden
The Grotto
Herb Garden
Native Virginia Landscape
Jack’s Vegetable Garden
Via Florum Garden
Mansion Ornamental Lawn

The Arboretum includes more than 200 species of trees and shrubs including native species as well as exotic specimens imported by the Dooleys. There is a national champion tree and seven state champions among the collection.

Garden Programs

From garden and tree tours to Wreath-Making Workshops, Maymont’s expert horticulturists offer a variety of great gardening programs year round. Mark your calendar for the Herbs Galore & More festival—everyone’s favorite plant sale—held each April. And visit our website to see our complete calendar.

For the latest Maymont gardening news and tips, visit our garden blog at maymontgardenblog.wordpress.com.

Maymont is operated and maintained by the private non-profit Maymont Foundation. Donations help to keep Maymont open to everyone.

VISITOR CENTER
2201 Shields Lake Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23220
maymont.org  804-358-7166
Marie’s Butterfly Trail is located at the Maymont Children’s Farm. It features seven flowerbeds east of the Barn and others interspersed between the animal pastures. The gardens are filled with butterfly-attracting perennials, annuals, grasses and shrubs. Signage offers fun facts about the butterfly’s life cycle and the plants that appeal to these winged beauties. It’s a great place to get ideas for your own butterfly garden!

**Elements for a Successful Butterfly Garden**

**A Variety of Food Sources**
Native plants—including grasses, perennials, annual bedding plants, shrubs and trees—attract more butterflies than non-native plants. Butterflies’ favorite flower colors are purple, yellow, pink and white.

**Water**
Puddling stations, which can be as simple as a damp area of ground covered with sand, provide the necessary drinking water needed for butterflies.

**Places to Land**
Rocks and gravel are good resting spots for butterflies, and they also help to warm these cold-blooded insects.

**Shelter**
Mulch and low-growing plants provide shelter for caterpillars to hide from predators, while trees and shrubs offer adult butterflies protection from wind and predators.

**Sunshine**
Since butterflies are cold-blooded, they need sunshine to stay active and be able to feed. In fact, butterflies cannot fly if their body temperature is less than 86 degrees. Also, most plants that attract butterflies need full sun to grow.

**Plants for a Successful Butterfly Garden**
The following plants may serve as host plants for caterpillars, nectar sources for butterflies or both.

- **Arrowwood Viburnum**
  - Viburnum dentatum
- **Aster**
  - Symphyotrichum sp.
- **Beebalm**
  - Monarda sp.
- **Black-eyed Susan**
  - Rudbeckia sp.
- **Blue Star Flower**
  - Amsonia sp.
- **Bush Clover**
  - Lespedeza sp.
- **Butterfly Bush**
  - Buddleja sp.
- **Button Snake-Root**
  - Eryngium yuccafolium
- **Catmint**
  - Nepeta sp.
- **Coneflower**
  - Echinacea sp.
- **False Indigo**
  - Baptisia sp.
- **Fennel**
  - Foeniculum sp.
- **Goldenrod**
  - Solidago sp.
- **Hardy Garden Mum**
  - Dendranthemum sp.
- **Indiangrass**
  - Sorghastrum nutans
- **Ironweed**
  - Vernonia sp.
- **Milkweed**
  - Asclepias sp.
- **Parsley**
  - Petroselinum crispum
- **Passionflower**
  - Passiflora sp.
- **Shasta Daisy**
  - Leucanthemum superbum
- **Stonecrop**
  - Sedum sp.
- **Spiraea**
  - Spiraea sp.
- **Switch Grass**
  - Panicum virgatum
- **Verbena**
  - Verbena sp.
- **Wand Flower**
  - Gaura sp.
- **Yarrow**
  - Achillea sp.

**Maymont: An American Estate**
Maymont is a 100-acre American estate, an extraordinary gift given to us by James and Sallie Dooley who lived there from 1893-1925. Whether strolling in the gardens, touring the mansion or watching river otters play, there is something for everyone to enjoy.