

## Haddam Garden Club

May 2018 Garden Blog Article

by Cindy Tillson



### Creating a Butterfly Garden

May is the ideal month to plant a butterfly garden. A garden can be any size you want from a container or two on your sunny back step to a full-blown garden. It does need certain components to be successful though, the most important being food and shelter. Shelter could be within the garden (leafy bushes or other wind-blocking things) or near the garden in the form of trees with deep bark crevasses or hollow logs. It will need at least 5-6 hours of sun per day and have a water source. Butterflies specifically need muddy water with rocks or other spots that they can land on to sip. The mud provides needed minerals. A critical item is that pesticides aren't used anywhere near the garden—even organic ones. Butterflies like to find a few rocks in the sun for drying or warming up too.

In the garden, you need two types of plants:

- Larval host plants that the butterfly will want to lay eggs on and
- Nectar plants for them to feed on.

Each type of butterfly is drawn to certain plants to lay their eggs on. This plant also is the food source for the caterpillars. This will cause some unsightliness, as they will eat the leaves. The second type of plant provides nectar for them. For the nectar plants it is important to have flowers that bloom throughout summer and fall.

Information on butterflies that are native to CT with specific plants they need can be found on the [Natureworks Butterfly Gardening List](#). Most of the plants are native (they have stood the test of time here in CT) although some are not. Butterfly bushes are not native but they are magnets for butterflies. They love annual flowers (they only survive one growing season but *bloom the entire* season) like snapdragons, lantana, marigolds and zinnias plus some herbs like dill and parsley. The annual herbs and flowers may self-seed from year to year.

Perhaps a good starting point is to choose a few butterflies that you want to attract and supply the plants necessary for them. Monarchs need milkweed to lay their eggs on but there are several types of milkweed other than the wild one that reseeds prolifically. *Asclepias tuberosa* Butterfly Milkweed and *Asclepias incarnata* Swamp Milkweed are very pretty and don't self seed.

[Natureworks](#), an organic garden center in Northford, CT, is known for the monarchs they raise and release. There is a lot of [information about Monarchs](#) on their website that you might find very interesting. Last year they raised over 1000. This year they are teaching others so they don't have to do it all by themselves.

## **A Vineyard Afternoon**

Do you like wine? Great food? Beautiful scenery? The Garden Club is sponsoring "A Vineyard Afternoon". It will be at RubyBelle Vineyard in Higganum on June 23 from 4-7. There will be wine tastings, vineyard tours, informational talks, (one by Laura Grimmer of The Perfect Pear in Chester) and of course, the luscious hors d'oeuvres that the Garden Club is noted for! See our new website [haddamgardenclub.com](http://haddamgardenclub.com) to reserve your spot. The event space is at a premium so don't delay.

The May Garden Club Meeting is for club members only. They will be performing their magic on the town gardens they take care of at the Brainerd Memorial Library, Higganum Green, Haddam Green, the Transfer Station, the Town Office Building and the Welcome to Haddam signs.