

Gardening For Pollinators in SEASHORE COASTAL Areas

by Patricia Sutton

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- 1. Create a Garden to benefit ALL pollinators and beneficial insects:** butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, bees, wasps, flies, beetles, and more! Learn a great deal about this topic by reading the article “How to Create a Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden” and utilizing the list that accompanies this article, “Recommended Plantings to Attract Hummingbirds, Butterflies, and Moths,” both by Patricia Sutton. Both can be found on NJ Audubon’s website:
<http://www.njaudubon.org/SectionBackyardHabitat/CreateaGarden.aspx>
<http://www.njaudubon.org/SectionBackyardHabitat/RecommendedNectarPlants.aspx>
*Warning: when you read the article and recommended plantings list, **please cross out and DO NOT PLANT Butterfly Bush**, a proven invasive native to China – providing nectar only – where our native perennials provide nectar AND are important caterpillar plants. Same is true for Rose of Sharon.*
- 2. My website, Pat Sutton’s Wildlife Garden, showcases teachings about (& practicing) wildlife habitat gardening:**
www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com
- 3. Begin small, one bed at a time, so you can easily maintain it (weed it, mulch it, divide spreading perennials) and be happy with the results. Changing 10% of your yard to more wildlife friendly plantings will make a big difference.** Chances are you’ll be so pleased with the results that you’ll want to change another 10% the following year, and so on. Install rain barrels with hoses attached that empty into the garden. Set up hoses so that you can easily water new plants (until they get established or during exceptionally dry periods).
- 4. A garden in a sunny spot is more likely to attract butterflies** (because they are solar powered and need the sun’s warmth to fly). There are many native plants that thrive in shade, so consider creating a layered landscape of these shade-loving perennials in under trees and shrubs.
- 5. Work with what you have.** Don’t cut down your forest to create a butterfly garden. Use the sunniest part of your yard, which just might be your front yard (rather than your backyard).
- 6. Maintain your yard and gardens organically: DO NOT use insecticides, herbicides, or fertilizers.** Seriously consider mixing clover seed in with grass seed. Clover is a nitrogen-fixing plant, so it enriches the soil with natural fertilizer. The deep roots of clover reduce soil compaction. Clover and Dandelion are excellent nectar plants. Keep pollinators safe by NOT using herbicides on these plants.
- 7. Do NOT use insecticides** – butterflies (and moths) and so many of our beneficial pollinators will die ... and hummingbirds feed on insects and will be affected.
- 8. Avoid plants treated with Neonicotinoid Insecticides.** Many Box Store natives have been treated with Neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are systemic (get into every part of the plant, including pollen, nectar, even dew) pesticides that are applied to many commercially-available nursery plants and are harmful to bees, caterpillars, moths, and butterflies. To learn more read the following:
 - Xerces Society’s “Protecting Bees From Neonicotinoid Insecticides in Your Garden (includes list of products with neonics in them)” at: <http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/NeonicsInYourGarden.pdf>
 - Xerces Society’s “Neonicotinoids and Bees, and How Neonicotinoids Move Throughout the Environment” at: <http://www.xerces.org/neonicotinoids-and-bees/>
 - Wild Ones excellent article, “Where have all the insects gone?” at: <http://www.wildones.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Neonics.pdf>

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9. **Support native plant nurseries** and special sales of native plants. If you live in southern NJ and are **searching for NATIVE PLANTS**, I maintain an updated list of some sources of native plants on our website: www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/some-sources-native-plants
10. Select **NATIVE PLANTS** since so many native nectar plants are also caterpillar plants. For example, our native asters are used by 112 species of butterflies and moths as caterpillar plants (goldenrods by 115 species). If this concept is new to you, read Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home, How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. Appendix One in *Bringing Nature Home* covers "Native Plants With Wildlife Value and Desirable Landscaping Attributes by Region." Going native is a win-win, since natives often grow with less care & fuss.
11. **BEWARE OF CULTIVARS** – they've been created or selected for a specific characteristic often at the expense of nectar and may even have a changed leaf chemistry (so butterflies can no longer lay their eggs on them).
12. Plant as many "Chocolate Cakes" as possible and **plant them in MASSES** (the term "Chocolate Cake" is explained in the article "How to Create a Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden," by Patricia Sutton, mentioned in point 1 of this handout). Massed plantings are more likely to catch the eye of hungry pollinators as well as make your garden dazzling to your eye.
13. **Provide nectar spring through late fall (frost). Native perennials** have a finite blooming period. Your garden will be a changing palette of color and nectar as you fill it with a variety of perennials that bloom at different times. The list of "Recommended Plantings to Attract Hummingbirds, Butterflies, and Moths," by Patricia Sutton (mentioned in point 1 of this handout) details time of bloom, whether annual or perennial, whether they are a CC (Chocolate Cake), etc.

Here are some of my favorite "Chocolate Cake" natives (and a few non-natives*) for Seashore sites:

- **Spring:** Red Maple, Beach Plum, Coral Honeysuckle, Coral Bells, Violets, Highbush Blueberry, Black Cherry
- **Mid June thru July:** Purple Coneflower, Common Milkweed, Butterfly Weed, Whorled Milkweed, Garden Phlox, Blazing Star, Anise Hyssop, Bee Balm, Wild Bergamot, Woodland Sunflower
- **Late July thru August (and September):** Mountain Mint, Ironweed, Common Boneset, Partridge Pea, Joe-pye-weed, Trumpet Creeper
- **Mid August thru September (and October):** Mistflower, Tall Sunflower, Autumn Sneezeweed, Sedum*, Horesmint, Late-flowering Thoroughwort, New England Aster, Common Blue Wood Aster, Smooth Blue Aster, Frost Aster, Seaside Goldenrod, Zigzag Goldenrod (and other native goldenrods), Groundsel-tree

14. **Save room in the garden for some "Chocolate Cake" annuals.** Annuals bloom all season long and until the frost, so are a steady source of nectar. Some of my favorite annuals are: Zinnias, Mexican Sunflower, Cannas, Tropical Milkweed, and Tropical Sage.
15. **Save room in the garden for some non-native perennials that are "Chocolate Cakes" and not problematic (invasive):** Catmint, Purpletop Vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*), Sedum, Black and Blue Salvia.

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16. **Incorporate Caterpillar Food Plants into your plan.** The list of “Recommended Plantings to Attract Hummingbirds, Butterflies, and Moths,” by Patricia Sutton (mentioned above) lists important caterpillar plants on the final two pages. Doug Tallamy lists the top 20+ woody plants and the top 20+ herbaceous plants used by butterflies and moths as caterpillar plants: <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net/what-to-plant.html>

With Monarchs needing all the help we can give them, **create Monarch Waystations** with patches of various native Milkweeds that Monarchs can use as caterpillar plants: Common Milkweed (in a meadow setting), Butterfly Weed and Whorled Milkweed (in a meadow or dry site), Swamp Milkweed (in a moist site), and Poke Milkweed (in a woodland site).
17. When you create a wildlife garden, **welcome all critters:** bees, wasps, flies, spiders, aphids, “the works” and read about each new visitor (you’ll learn that many are important pollinators / play key roles in the natural world).
18. **Document evolution of your gardens** -- photo BEFORE, DURING, & AFTER, and for years!
19. **Show off your garden & its visitors** (butterflies, caterpillars, hummingbirds) to neighbors, friends, family, co-workers. Share some of your divided perennials with new wildlife gardeners, so they can start their own garden with “Chocolate Cakes” – so your garden won’t be the only oasis in a sea of green chem lawns.
20. **Visit other butterfly & hummingbird gardens for design and plant ideas.** For 23 years I led tours of Private Wildlife Gardens in Cape May County. You can take a virtual tour of many of the gardens that were included on these tours on my website:
North Tour: www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/north-tour-photo-gallery
South Tour: www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/south-tour-photo-gallery
Mid-County Tour: www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/mid-county-tour-photo-gallery
21. **Maintenance – be sure to MULCH!** Use salt hay and / or grass clippings as mulch to inhibit weeds and keep the soil from drying out. As a bonus these types of mulch break down into rich soil and enrich your garden. Root & bark mulch take years to break down and rob the soil of nutrients that plants need.
22. **To weed or not to weed?** Buy a good wildflower field guide and weed book and be sure you are weeding something you truly do not want. Many seedlings are nature’s gifts:
23. **Don’t tidy up in the fall** – you’ll be carrying off next year’s butterflies and moths, since many of them winter as eggs, partially grown caterpillars, or chrysalises on the plants in your garden. Too, by leaving perennials standing you are providing important winter food (spent seed heads) & cover for birds.
24. Consider **SIGNAGE for your wildlife habitat** – so neighbors (and your municipality) understand why you have an explosion of wildflowers instead of lawn:
 - (1) Monarch Waystation: <http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/certify.html>
 - (2) Certified Butterfly Garden: http://www.nababutterfly.com/cert_index.html
 - (3) Wild Ones Yard Sign: <http://www.wildones.org/store/>
 - (4) Certified Wildlife Habitat: <http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Certify.aspx>
 - (5) Pesticide Free Zone Yard Signs:
www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/lawns-and-landscapes/overview/be-a-model-for-your-community