

Garden Butterflies of Greater Los Angeles

Adapted from *Butterflies of Greater Los Angeles* by Rudi Mattoni (1990)



Anise Swallowtail (*Papilio zelicaon zelicaon*)

Larvae feed on parsley family, both wild and introduced species. Common garden foodplants are Anise (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and Carrots. Adult males congregate on hilltops. Larvae easy to find and rear.



Western Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus rutulus*)

Usual larval foodplants are sycamore, poplar, cottonwood, willows and alder. Can be encouraged in gardens with good nectar sources: lantana, zinnia, thistles, Yerba Santa; usually large high flowers. Adults also sip mud. Diapause as a pupa, adults can be seen from February to October.



Cabbage Butterfly (*Pieris rapae*)

This European species is now widespread in North America. Larvae eat many members of the mustard family, nasturtium is a good garden choice.



Common White (*Pieris protodice*)

Less common than Cabbage Butterfly, also feeds on mustards but is not a crop pest.



Alfalfa Butterfly (*Colias eurytheme*)

Larvae will eat many legumes, but usually feeds on alfalfa. Seasonal variation from near yellow with narrow borders in spring to orange and wide borders in fall. Many females white.



Senna Sulfur (*Phoebis sennae marcellina*)

Foodplant *Cassia* sp. Maintained by migration and breeding in gardens. Populations fluctuate annually, often disappearing for years. Albino females in high frequency.



Nicippe Sulfur (*Eurema nicippe*)

Foodplant *Cassia* sp. Presence and local distribution pattern almost identical to Senna Sulfur.



Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

This widespread species is highly migratory. Adults overwinter in communal roosts near the coast. Adults can be seen all year in Los Angeles. Larvae eat milkweeds (*Asclepias* sp.).



Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae incarnata*)

Easily attracted by planting passion vines (*Passiflora*). Easy to breed. This tropical species has expanded its range with the widespread cultivation of its foodplant.



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta rubria*)

Widespread across northern hemisphere, but never common. Adults prefer rotting fruit to nectar. Foodplant is nettles, larvae will also eat baby tears.



Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)

The most widespread butterfly in the world. Many foodplants, particularly thistles.



West Coast Lady (*Vanessa carye anabella*)

This easy-to-breed species is most common during the spring. Its larvae feed on native and exotic mallows, especially cheeseweed.



Virginia Lady (*Vanessa virginiensis*)

Another globally distributed butterfly. Most common food plant in our area is *Gnaphalium*.



Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa antiopa*)

Adults are attracted to rotting fruit and can be seen all year. Larvae are gregarious and easy to rear. Foodplants are willow and poplar.



Buckeye (*Precis coenia*)

Foodplant usually Plantain (*Plantago*) species. Easy to breed. Adults usually sedentary, but capable of long migration.



Common Hairstreak (*Strymon melinus pudica*)

Adults can be seen from February to November. Larvae feed on many food plants. Easy to breed, but cannibalistic.



Marina Blue (*Leptotes marina*)

Usual garden foodplant is Plumbago, but feeds on many legumes.



Fiery Skipper (*Hylephila phyleus*)

Common everywhere. Larvae feed on grasses.



Umber Skipper (*Paratrytone melane*)

Tropical species. Larvae feed on grasses and sedges. Adults found in wet areas from April to September.



Western Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus communis albescens*)

Adults seen from February to October. Larvae feed on mallows.

Plants to Attract Garden Butterflies in Greater Los Angeles

Both Nectar Sources *and* Larval Foodplants

Native

Buckwheats
Penstemons
Monkey flowers (*Mimulus*)
Milkweed
Sidalcea
Sphaeralcea
Lavatera
Malacothamnus
Deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*)
Rattlepod (*Astragalus*)
Thistles

Exotic

Plumbago
Citrus
Artichoke
Sweet Pea
Mustards
All Crucifers (radish, cabbage)
Anise/Fennel
Cassia
Mimosas
Hollyhock

Nectar Sources Only

Native

Goldenrod (*Solidago*)
Bush Sunflower (*Encelia*)
Aster (*Corethrogyne*)
Yarrow (*Achillea*)
Golden Yarrow (*Eriophyllum*)
Senecio douglasii
Epilobium
Bush Lupine
Native Clover (*Trifolium*)
Wild Lilac (*Ceanothus*)
Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*)
Monardella species
Heliotropium curassavicum
Yerba Santa
Verbena

Exotic

Lantana (yellow-orange best)
Buddleia
Lavender
Thyme
Marigold
Cornflower
Cosmos
Calendula
Heathers
Scabiosa
Exotic Clovers (*Trifolium*)
Spiraea

Larval Foodplants Only

Native

Sycamore
Willows
Milkweeds (*Asclepias*)
Bunch Grasses
Gnaphalium

Exotic

Nasturtium
Alfalfa
Passion Vine (*Passiflora*)
Grasses
Plantago