



Butterfly Larval Host Plant List

The butterfly species on this list all occur in Pennsylvania. Some of them are found throughout the state and others occur locally in connection with their larval host plants. Many butterfly species have adapted to feed upon non-native plants if these plants are in the same family as the native larval host. Some of these plants are highly invasive and should never be cultivated, such as: garlic mustard, canada thistle and crown-vetch.

There are additional larval host plants for many of the butterflies listed, especially the ones which feed on plant families that contain many species. Some butterflies also exhibit local host plant preferences depending upon plant availability and habitat.

Female butterflies can travel for miles in search of host plants to lay their eggs upon. Plant the native species and plant more than one, especially in small herbaceous hosts. Watch for evidence of caterpillars feeding on the leaves, your plants are now part of the food web. Also remember...DO NOT APPLY PESTICIDES.

Butterfly

Caterpillar Host Plants

Pipevine swallowtail	pipevines (<i>Aristolochia</i> spp.)
Zebra swallowtail	pawpaw (<i>Asimina triloba</i>)
Black swallowtail	parsley family - parsley, dill, fennel, carrot, queen anne's lace, golden alexanders (<i>Zizia aurea</i>); rue family - common rue
Giant swallowtail	northern prickly-ash (<i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>), common rue
Eastern tiger swallowtail	tuliptree (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>), wild black cherry (<i>Prunus serotina</i>), ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.), sweetbay magnolia (<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>)
Spicebush swallowtail	spicebush (<i>Lindera benzoin</i>), sassafras (<i>Sassafras albidum</i>)
Cabbage white (non-native)	mustard family - cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, garlic mustard (invasive non-native), winter-cress
Clouded sulphur	clovers
Orange sulphur	alfalfa, clovers
American copper	sheep sorrel, docks
Banded hairstreak	oaks (<i>Quercus</i> spp.), hickories (<i>Carya</i> spp.), black walnut (<i>Juglans nigra</i>)
Gray hairstreak	flowers and seeds of - tick-trefoils, bush-clovers, clovers, mallows, hibiscus
Henry's elfin	redbud (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>), American holly (<i>Ilex opaca</i>), blueberries (<i>Vaccinium</i> spp.)
Eastern tailed blue	flowers and seeds of - clovers, bush-clovers, tick-trefoils, sweet clovers
Baltimore	white turtlehead (<i>Chelone glabra</i>)
Spring azure / Summer azure	buds and flowers of - flowering dogwood (<i>Cornus florida</i>), wild black cherry (<i>Prunus serotina</i>), viburnums, blueberries, meadow-sweet (<i>Spirea</i> spp.), new jersey tea (<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>), wingstem (<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>)
Variegated fritillary	violets, pansies
Great spangled fritillary	violets
Meadow fritillary	violets
Silvery checkerspot	ox-eye sunflower (<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>), sunflowers (<i>Helianthus</i> spp.), black-eyed susans (<i>Rudbeckia</i> spp.), wingstem (<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>), coneflowers (<i>Echinacea</i> spp.)

Pearl crescent	asters (<i>Symphotrichum</i> spp.) - excluding white wood aster (<i>Eurybia divaricata</i>)
Question mark	hackberry trees (<i>Celtis</i> spp.), elms (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.), nettles
Eastern comma	nettles, hops, elms (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.)
Mourning cloak	willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), elms (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.), aspens (<i>Populus</i> spp.), birches (<i>Betula</i> spp.), hackberry trees (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
American lady	pussytoes (<i>Antennaria</i> spp.), pearly everlasting, fragrant cudweed
Painted lady	thistles (some are invasive non-natives), mallows, hollyhock, asters, legumes and many others
Red admiral	nettles, false nettle
Common buckeye	english plantain, common plantain, figworts, vervains, snapdragon, toadflax
Red-spotted purple	cherries (<i>Prunus</i> spp.), willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), aspens (<i>Populus</i> spp.), serviceberries (<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.), birches (<i>Betula</i> spp.), hawthorns (<i>Crataegus</i> spp.), sweet crabapple (<i>Malus coronaria</i>)
Viceroy	willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), aspens (<i>Populus</i> spp.)
Hackberry & Tawny emperors	hackberry trees (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
Appalachian brown	sedges (<i>Carex</i> spp.), bulrush
Little wood satyr	bluegrasses, orchard grass
Common wood nymph	purpletop grass (<i>Tridens flavus</i>), poverty grass, big bluestem, little bluestem
Monarch	milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.)
Silver-spotted skipper	black locust (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>), honey-locust (<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>), tick-trefoils, hog-peanut and other legumes
Wild indigo duskywing (skipper)	wild indigo (<i>Baptisia tinctoria</i>), blue false indigo (<i>Baptisia australis</i>), crown-vetch (invasive non-native)
Common checkered skipper	mallows, sidas, velvet-leaf, hollyhock
Peck's skipper	rice cutgrass (<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>), bluegrasses
Little glassywing (skipper)	purpletop grass (<i>Tridens flavus</i>)
Zabulon skipper	purpletop grass (<i>Tridens flavus</i>), lovegrass

Written by York County Master Gardener Debra Carman, March 2017 (Updated February 2018)

For more information:

[Caterpillars of Eastern North America](#) by David L. Wagner, Publisher: Princeton University Press; 1st Edition
(August 14, 2005)

[Butterflies of Pennsylvania a field guide](#) by James L. Monroe & David M. Wright, Publisher: University of Pittsburgh Press;
(2017)

[Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants](#) by Douglas W. Tallamy, Publisher: Timber Press;
Exp. Upd. Edition (April 1, 2009)

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