



# Butterflies










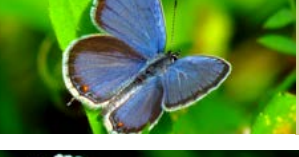
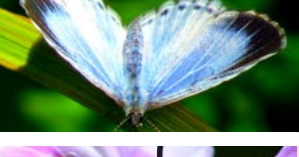

Adapted from Chicagoland Gardening Magazine  
Pictured: Monarch Butterfly via Wikimedia



# Common Butterflies in

|   | Name  | Adult Food  | Caterpillar Food                                       | Flight Time    |
|---|---|---|--|----------------|
| Brush-footed Butterflies (Nymphalidae) Subfamily Admirals & Relatives (Limenitidinae) |   |   |  |                |
|        | Viceroy<br>( <i>Limentis archippus</i> )              | Composite flowers, i.e.<br>asters, goldenrod,<br>Joe-Pye weed | Willows, sometimes<br>poplars                          | Spring to Fall |
| Brush-footed Butterflies (Nymphalidae) Subfamily Emperors (Apaturinae)                |   |   |  |                |
|        | Hackberry Emperor<br>( <i>Asterocampa celtis</i> )    | Sap, rotting fruit, dung,<br>carrion                          | Hackberry trees  | Spring to Fall |
| Brush-footed Butterflies (Nymphalidae) Subfamily Satyrs (Satyrinae)                   |   |   |  |                |
|        | Little Wood Satyr<br>( <i>Megisto cymela</i> )        | Sap, aphid honeydew,<br>rarely flower nectar                  | Grasses  | Late Spring    |
| Brush-footed Butterflies (Nymphalidae) Subfamily True Brush-foots                     |   |   |  |                |
|        | Pearl Crescent<br>( <i>Phyciodes tharos</i> )         | Nectar from a great<br>variety of flowers                     | Smooth leaved<br>true asters                           | Spring to Fall |
|       | Question Mark<br>( <i>Polygonia interrogationis</i> ) | Rotting fruit, tree sap,<br>dung, carrion                     | Hops, nettles, elms,<br>hackberries                    | Summer to Fall |
|      | Mourning Cloak<br>( <i>Nymphalis antiopa</i> )        | Tree sap, esp. oaks,<br>rotting fruit                         | Willows,<br>cottonwoods, elms,<br>birches, hackberries | Summer         |
|      | Eastern Comma<br>( <i>Polygonia comma</i> )           | Rotting fruit and<br>tree sap                                 | Nettles, elms, and hops                                | Summer to Fall |
|      | American Lady<br>( <i>Venessa virginiensis</i> )      | Flower nectar esp. aster,<br>goldenrod, marigold              | Ironweed, plantain-leaved<br>pussytoes                 | Spring to Fall |
|      | Red Admiral<br>( <i>Vanessa atalanta</i> )            | Tree sap, rotting fruit,<br>common milkweed, aster            | Nettles, false nettles                                 | Spring to Fall |
|      | Common Buckeye<br>( <i>Junonia coenia</i> )           | Aster, chickory,<br>tickseed, sunflower                       | Plantains, snapdragons                                 | Spring to Fall |

# the Chicago Area

|  | Name  | Adult Food  | Caterpillar Food  | Flight Time                                     |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Swallowtail Family   |   |   |   |   |
|    | Black Swallowtail<br>( <i>Papilio polyxenes</i> )       | Red clover, milkweed, and thistles  | Parsley family (Apiaceae) including Queen Anne's Lace, carrot, celery, and dill | Spring to Fall                                  |
|    | Eastern Tiger Swallowtail<br>( <i>Papilio glaucus</i> ) | Flowers of various plants esp. wild cherry and lilac                                      | Leaves of trees & shrubs, esp. cottonwood, tulip tree, wild cherry              | Spring to Fall                                  |
| Whites & Sulphurs (Papilionidae)   |   |   |   |   |
|    | Cabbage White<br>( <i>Pieris rapae</i> )                | Broccoli family and mustards, dandelion, asters, and mints                                | Plants in the mustard family ( <i>Brassicaceae</i> )                            | Usually the first butterfly to emerge in spring |
|    | Clouded Sulphur<br>( <i>Colias philodice</i> )          | Many nectar plants  | White clover, alfalfa, other legumes  | Summer to Fall                                  |
|   | Orange Sulphur<br>( <i>Colias eurytheme</i> )           | Alfalfa and white clover  | White clover, alfalfa, other legumes  | Summer to Fall                                  |
| Monarchs, Subfamily (Danainae)   |   |   |   |   |
|  | Monarch<br>( <i>Danaus plexippus</i> )                  | Lilac, lantana, goldenrods, thistles, blazing stars, tickseed, sunflower                  | Milkweeds   | Spring and Summer                               |
| Skippers   |   |   |   |   |
|  | Silver Spotted Skipper<br>( <i>Epargyreus clarus</i> )  | Everlasting pea, common milkweed, red clover, buttonbush, blazing star, and thistles      | Locusts, false indigo   | Spring and Summer                               |
| Gossamer-wing Butterflies- Blues (Lycaenidae, subfamily Polyommatainae)            |   |   |   |   |
|  | Eastern Tailed-Blue<br>( <i>Cupido comyntas</i> )       | Close to the ground flowers which are open or short-tubed like wild strawberry and asters | Clover, alfalfa, and other legumes  | Spring to Fall                                  |
|  | Summer Azure<br>( <i>Celastrina neglecta</i> )          | Various flower nectar   | Gray dogwood, New Jersey tea and others   | Summer  |
| Clearwings-Sphingidae  |   |   |   |   |
|  | Snowberry Clearwing<br>( <i>Hemaris diffinis</i> )      | Snowberry, lantana  | Snowberry, dwarf bush honeysuckle (diervilla)                                   | Spring to Fall                                  |

These are butterflies that might be commonly seen in a garden. Flight time denotes the usual season you might expect to find adult butterflies but each species may have different numbers of broods. As a result, you may see a first generation in spring and a later generation in fall.

Information on food and flight time courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey, Butterflies of Illinois

# Nectar Sources

## Cultivated Flowers

Alyssum  
Daisies  
Lantana  
Snap Dragons  
Sedums  
Russian Sage  
Salvia  
Zinnias  
Phlox  
Marigolds

## Shrubs and Trees

Buckeye  
Butterfly Bush  
Hawthorns  
Fruit Trees  
New Jersey Tea  
Serviceberry  
Spicebush  
Sumac

## Wildflowers

Blazing Star  
Black-Eyed Susan  
Boneset  
Prairie Clover  
Milkweeds  
Coneflower  
Goldenrod  
Asters  
Ironweed  
Joe Pye Weed  
Prairie Phlox  
Blue Vervain  
Wild Bergamot  
Golden Alexander  
Penstemon



Distinctive markings have evolved as a defense mechanism against birds and other predators.

Hatching from eggs, a caterpillar will shed its skin several times before arriving at a stage where it forms a chrysalis (see above).

After a few weeks, the butterfly emerges, lays its eggs, and dies.

## Butterfly Facts

- July and August are peak months for butterflies around Chicago
- The butterfly lifecycle includes 4 steps: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), and adult winged butterfly
- Butterflies use broad spectrum vision, sense receptors on their antennae, legs, feet, and other body parts, and smell to find nectar
- Butterflies are most active in warm temperatures such as those from mid-morning to late afternoon



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[theconservationfoundation.org/conservation-home](http://theconservationfoundation.org/conservation-home)

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