
Plants & Butterflies

Creating a pollinating green space



When you see a butterfly land on a flower, you're looking at more than a pretty scene: *it actually impacts the whole world.*

Our class decided to create a Pollinating Green Space, which is more than just a garden because we intentionally set out to build the framework for a healthy, interconnected ecosystem. We learned about our area in Northern California, and about what kinds of butterflies we have, and how best to bring them together.



Pollinators

Even though bees are the best-known pollinators, we decided to make a butterfly garden. Butterflies are known as a great indicator of an ecosystem's well-being, and it's easier to count them and track the progress of our green space.

We had to pick which kind of butterfly. At first I thought it would be Monarch butterflies because they are the most famous ones in Northern California, where we live. But we learned that Monarchs only eat Milkweed, which would not make for a very diverse garden. Then we learned about Painted Lady butterflies, and how they are getting more endangered because their ecosystems are being damaged. They sounded perfect for our butterfly garden. So we knew what kind of pollinator we wanted to attract, and now it was time to figure out how to attract them!

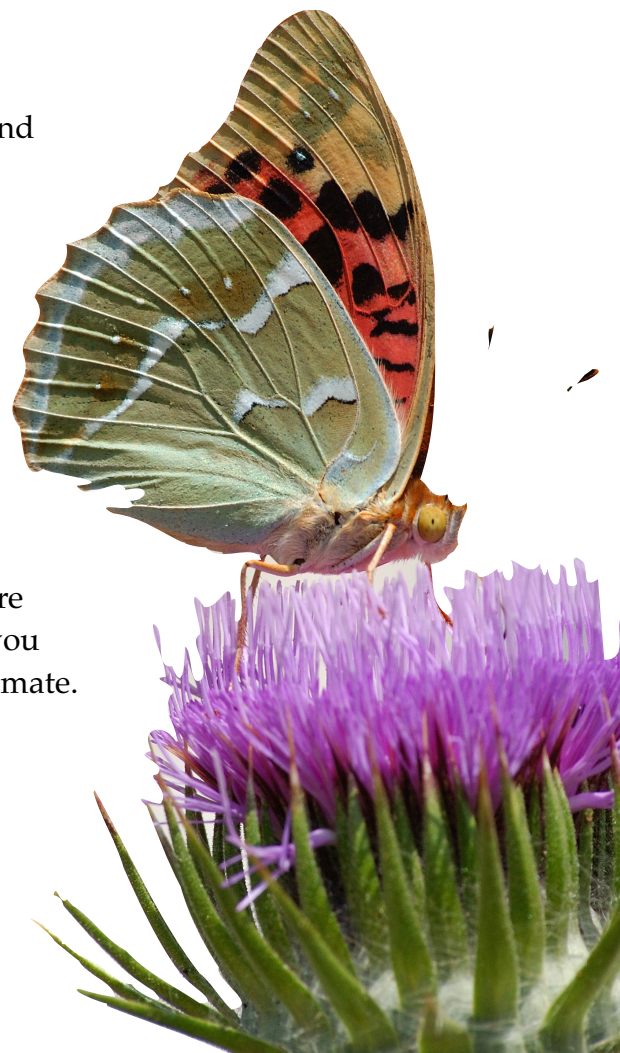
Attracting Butterflies

Butterflies want sunny open spaces, shelter from the wind, and fresh water. But always remember what is most important to them: nectar. And the type of nectar they want will depend on the type of butterfly.

Our class went to a native plant nursery to find out what kinds of plants have the right nectar for our Painted Lady butterflies. We learned they like goldenrods, marigolds, and thistle.

For your own pollinating green space, you can learn about what to plant after you decide what kind of butterflies you are trying to attract. You can go to a nursery and they will help you pick plants that are right for your butterflies, and for your climate.

Make sure you get some flowers that have big landing platforms, because butterflies are perching feeders and like landing on them. While the butterflies are walking on those flowers to eat the nectar, the pollen rubs off on their legs, and that's how they end up moving the pollen from one flower to the next.



Building a Green Space



1

Prepare a box and fill it with good soil.



2

Plant seeds and flowers so that they form a nectar-rich ridge around the edges.



3

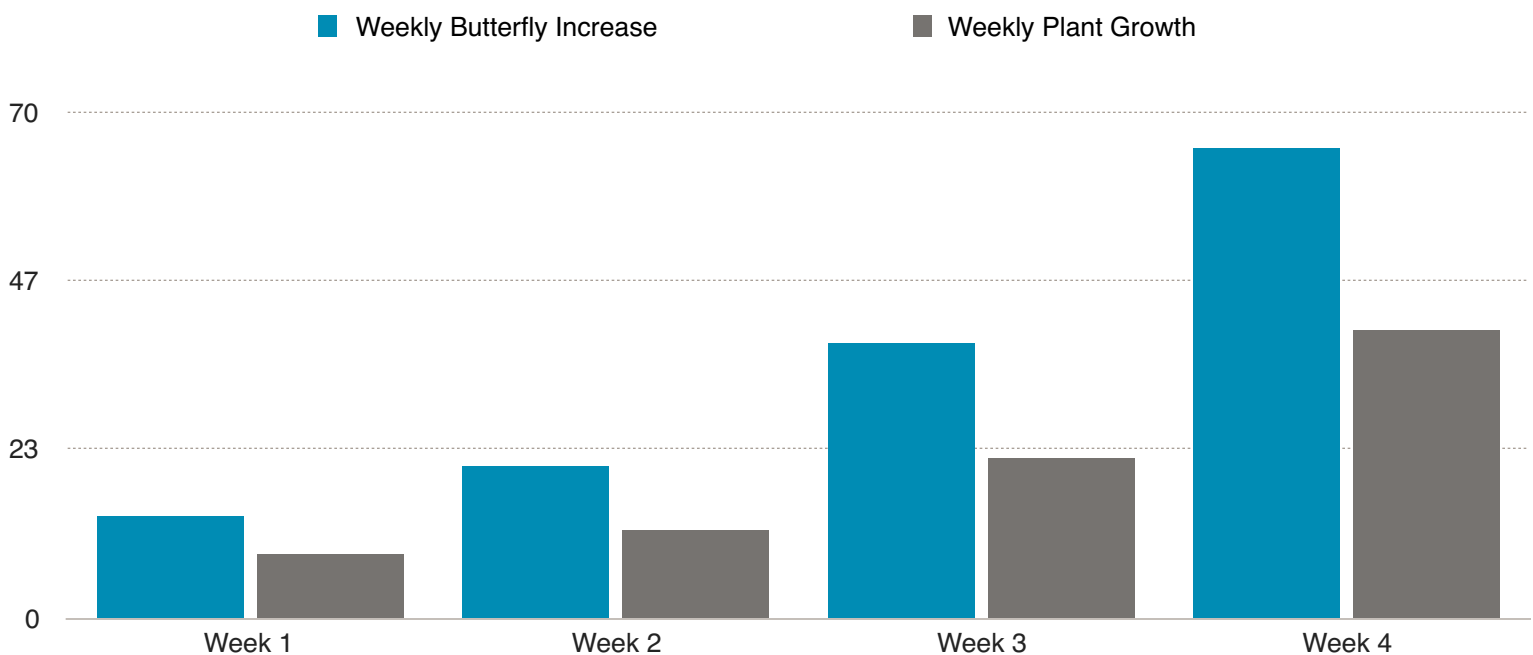
Water your plants every other day and watch your beautiful garden grow!

Gardening Supplies

Supplies	Actual Cost
Seeds	\$ 5.99
Equipment	\$ 54.98
Flowers	\$ 21.76
Planter	\$ 44.98
Soil	\$ 18.56
Watering can	\$ 19.29
Plant food	\$ 7.59
Wheel barrel	\$ 29.99
Total	\$ 203.14

Tracking Our Success

Once we planted our butterfly garden, we started counting how many butterflies came. We tracked it every day, and after a few weeks we made a chart that we could add to over time. This chart tells us how well our green space is doing.



We know when it's doing well. And we'll be able to see if the numbers go down and we need to make an adjustment.

The more butterflies we see, the better the world will be. Think of if everyone all over the world maintained a little bit of green space like this, counting the pollinators and the plants, making sure they are living in harmony. If enough people pay attention to these little spaces, they can together make up a big space.

That's why we wanted to share our project with you. If you do the same, then humans, plants, and animals all win

Green spaces are so good for the environment.

They filter pollutants and dust from the air, they provide shade and lower temperatures, and they even reduce erosion of soil into our waterways. They are easy to build, and it's wonderful to watch them grow. A butterfly garden is a particularly lovely form of green space because you get to watch them flutter around the flowers, and you know that every single one of those butterflies means it's a healthy, balanced, and interconnected ecosystem.

In conclusion, the more butterflies we see, the better the world will be.

