

**Rebecca Konopka**  
Carter County Extension Office

## Installing a Butterfly Garden Can Play a Critical Role in Plant Pollination

Butterflies aren't the only ones that can benefit from butterfly gardens. Honeybees, which are native to Europe and introduced to the United States, are also important pollinators for home gardens. Numerous other pollinator species including native bees, butterflies and moths, beetles, birds and bats benefit our gardens. Sadly, many of the pollinators have suffered from habitat loss, chemical misuse, diseases and parasites.

Butterfly gardeners play a critical role in nurturing and conserving both native and introduced pollinators. Butterfly gardens and landscapes provide pollinators with food, water, shelter and habitat to complete their life cycles. Urban areas typically feature large areas of pavement and buildings and offer little in the way of food and shelter for pollinators. Garden plantings can help bridge that gap.

Just like with any new flower bed, you want to pick a site for your butterfly garden with good drainage, full sun, and an area with good weed control. If you are starting a new butterfly garden, get a soil test, eliminate the weeds and add organic matter.

Butterflies, honeybees and other pollinators need protein from flower pollen and carbohydrates from flower nectar. Plan to provide a variety of different types of flowers and aim to have three different flower species in bloom throughout the growing season. Showy, colorful flowers and massed groups of flowers, particularly in small gardens, provide efficient feeding stations for the pollinators. Flowering trees and shrubs also provide excellent food sources. Native plants share a long history with their pollinators, including a wide variety of natives will make your garden a favorite destination for pollinators.

You want to have a variety of plants, preferably native and non-native ones that will bloom throughout the growing season. Some of these are purple cone flower, black-eyed susan, asters, golden rod, yarrow, tall blazing star, milkweed, coreopsis and many more. The Kentucky Native Plant Society has an updated listing of nurseries in Kentucky that sell native plants.

Be sure to have puddling spots for butterflies to get a drink of water. Pollinators also need shelter from the wind, scorching sun, and heavy rain. Fences can serve as windbreaks, which may make the garden more attractive to pollinators.

For information on starting a butterfly garden, contact the Carter County office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin,

national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

**Upcoming Events:**

- The **Grayson Farmer's Market** is open on Saturdays from 9:00 AM until noon and on Thursdays from 2:00-6:00 PM. The market is located in the shed behind the Extension Office. The **Olive Hill Farmer's Market** is located in the Save-a-Lot parking lot and is open on Saturdays and Wednesdays at 8:00 AM and Mondays at 3:00 PM until sell out each day. There will be a pop-up market on the first Tuesday of the month in the Friendship & Chapel House parking lot from 6:00-8:00 PM.
- **Grayson Farmer's Market Kid's Day** (Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-3:30) & **Olive Hill Farmer's Market Kid's Day** (Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-4:30) - Youth are invited to the Farmer's Market for fun activities and for Kid's Bucks to be spent at the market.
- **Hike & Learn** – Friday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 AM – Grayson Lake State Park Lick Falls Overlook Trail
- **Little Sandy Beekeepers Meeting** – Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM- Speaker: Chris Palmer, Dadant Manager; Topic: Varroa Mite Control & Preparing for Winter