



Foundation for  
National Parks  
& Wildlife

Backyard Buddies is a free education program run by the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife. It gives you simple tips to transform your backyard into a safe and inviting habitat haven.

## Butterflies - produce blooms of colour with their appearance and behaviour.



Jenny Hillman

Butterflies are a welcome addition to any garden and like many native buddies, need all the help they can get to make sure they remain regular backyard guests.

Attracting and keeping butterflies around your yard is a cinch. Butterflies go through a number of different lifecycle changes but they always need food, shelter from the wind and a drink of water.

Butterflies depend on two types of plants to survive. Flowering plants produce nectar to keep butterflies alive and food plants are ones on which the female can lay her eggs.

Butterflies can only see red, green, and yellow. Butterflies cannot fly if their body temperature is less than 28°C. There are about 400 species of butterfly in Australia.

Butterflies taste with their feet. Their taste sensors are located in the feet, and by standing on their food, they can taste it!

Butterflies don't have mouths that allow them to bite or chew. They, along with most moths have a long straw-like structure called a proboscis which they use to drink nectar and juice

### You can make your neighbourhood friendlier for butterflies

Butterflies are cold-blooded and need plenty of warm sunshine. You may see them in early spring with wings wide open to the warming sun. Or you may see them just touch the top of a bird bath or pond.

Purple, red, orange, and yellow flowers attract butterflies. By planting these colour flowering plants, your backyard or park can become a better home for butterflies.

### What is a backyard buddy?

Backyard buddies are the native animals that share our built-up areas, our beaches, waterways, backyards and parks. The butterfly is a backyard buddy.

Backyard buddies are also the local people who value the living things around them and are willing to protect and encourage them by doing a few simple things in our environment.

You can be a backyard buddy. It's easy! All you have to do is understand what our buddies like and do not like and take some simple steps to help care for them.

### Butterflies love:

- **Sunshine** – that gives them the energy they need for flight. Provide a small, open area, without overhanging trees.
- **Garden flowers** – to find the sweet taste of nectar.
- **Puddles of water** – where they can safely take a drink.

### But they don't like:

- **Strong winds** – which can tear their fragile wings.
- **Rain** – that keeps them from flight.
- **Garden pesticides** – which kill them.

EXPLORE:

# Butterflies

[www.backyardbuddies.org.au](http://www.backyardbuddies.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies](https://www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies)

## Be a buddy to the Butterflies

### Try to:

- provide lots of open areas that let in warm sunshine – cold blooded butterflies need plenty of sunshine to give them energy.
- put some rocks in your butterfly garden to soak up the rays and give your butterflies a place to sun themselves.
- maintain diversity in plant height, colour and flowering periods. Grow a variety of nectar-rich natives in your garden so a reliable food source is available all year.
- plant groups of the same species together so that it is more obvious to butterflies and locate tall plants at the back to offer maximum protection from strong winds.
- place a shallow dish of muddy water in a sunny spot.
- find out what to plant. Each type of caterpillar has its favourite plant for food.
- experiment and learn which flowers your local butterflies prefer. Get to know what their caterpillars look like.

### Avoid:

- using poisonous pesticides in your butterfly garden.
- mowing or slashing grasses and edges on which butterfly larvae are dependent.

### Don't be surprised if:

- you see butterflies hang upside down from leaves or twigs. Butterflies rest in this position on cloudy days or at night, hidden amongst foliage

## Find out more about your own backyard buddies

### VISIT:

[www.backyardbuddies.org.au](http://www.backyardbuddies.org.au)

[www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies](https://www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies)



Di Donovan

A common sight along the east coast of Australia, the Sarpedon or Blue Triangle butterfly (above) its mature larvae (right).



The Richmond birdwing is one of Australia's largest butterflies with a wingspan of up to 16 cm in the males. These butterflies are listed as vulnerable in Queensland due to the introduction of a toxic weed called the Dutchmans Pipe, which becomes a death trap for larvae when they hatch.



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