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Growing Butterfly Bushes in the Home Landscape

Growing Butterfly Bushes in the Home Landscape

An excellent way to attract butterflies to your garden is to plant annuals and perennials that a attraction for butterflies is the butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*).

Butterfly bushes are medium-sized, woody shrubs. However, they're generally regarded as typically die back to the ground each winter. Fortunately, their performance is not greatly affected grow back rapidly after the dead wood is removed in early spring and bloom on the current open, arching habit. By the end of summer, plants are often 5 to 6 feet tall.

The leaves of the butterfly bush are 4 to 10 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide. Upper leaf's undersides of the leaves are grayish white.

In addition to attracting butterflies, the fragrant flowers also lure bees and hummingbirds to flowers are borne on dense, 6 to 12 inch-long spikes (panicles). In Iowa, flowering typically frost. *Buddleia davidii* cultivars possess a wide range of flower colors including white, yellow panicles on some varieties are upright, while others have a graceful, arching form.

Butterfly bushes perform best in moist, well-drained soils in partial to full sun. Avoid wet, poor winter protection. Butterfly bushes planted in open, exposed sites are more likely to be destroyed.

Maintenance practices are fairly simple. Remove spent flower panicles to encourage additional mound a few inches of soil around the base of each plant. The soil protects the plant crown destruction. The following spring, remove the soil and prune the plants back to within a few

Insects and diseases are generally not major problems in Iowa. The biggest threat to the bush

There are numerous varieties of butterfly bush available to home gardeners. A listing of some description of each, is provided below.

- 'African Queen' - dark violet flowers, panicles are 8 inches long.
- 'Black Knight' - dark purple flowers are produced on 6 to 8 inch-long panicles.
- 'Charming' - flowers are pink with orange throats, borne on 6 to 8 inch-long panicles.
- 'Dartmoor' - mauve-purple flowers are borne on large, multi-branched flower heads.
- 'Dubonnet' - violet-purple flowers.
- 'Empire Blue' - violet-blue flowers with orange eyes are borne on 6 to 12 inch-long panicle
- 'Harlequin' - flowers are reddish purple, green leaves have creamy white margins.
- 'Honeycomb' - yellow flowers have orange eyes.
- 'Nanho Blue' - compact variety, mauve-blue flowers are produced on 4 to 6 inch-long panicle
- 'Nanho Purple' - compact variety, produces magenta-purple flowers.
- 'Pink Delight' - true pink flowers are borne on 6 to 12 inch-long panicles, gray-green foliage
- 'Royal Red' - flowers are purple-red, panicles are 6 to 12 inches long.

While varieties of *Buddleia davidii* are the most widely planted butterfly bush in the midwest (*alternifolia*) is another possibility for home landscapes. This species is slightly more hardy does not die back to the ground during winter. Plants are large, arching shrubs that grow appear in June on the previous year's growth. Butterfly bushes are available in garden centers include:

Bluestone Perennials 7211 Middle Ridge Road **Plant Delights Nursery** 9241 Sa
Madison, Ohio 44057 Raleigh, NC 27603

A colorful brochure, "Common Butterflies of Iowa", is available for \$1.00. If your local County you may order it from: Extension Distribution Center
Printing and Publications Building
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

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