March Gardening Guide (2011)
By Patricia Porchey

Q. I’ve heard that butterflies are important pollinators like bees so what can I do to bring them to my yard?
A. In order to attract butterflies to your garden, you must have water, shelter and food for both adults and larvae. The adult butterfly needs to sip nectar from a variety of colorful flowers; however, the caterpillar stage of the butterfly life cycle is when the most food is consumed. The unique thing about butterflies is that they are plant specific when it comes to larval food plants, meaning they are selective when it comes to which plants they will lay their eggs on. For example, a monarch butterfly will only lay its eggs on a milkweed plant and a sulfur butterfly will only lays its eggs on a Cassia or Senna plant.

In a typical winter in Florida, many butterflies remain and do not migrate south. For that reason it is important to have year-round flowering plants in your garden. Don’t forget to plant herbs such as dill and parsley as they too are larval food plants. Perhaps more important, the flowers you select for your butterfly garden will also entice honeybees to come for nourishment as well. You will be contributing to our honeybee population while enjoying the happy fluttering of your butterflies.

For additional information, attend one of the upcoming classes below or download Butterfly Gardening in Florida [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW05700.pdf].

Butterfly gardening classes: Twin Lakes Park, Mar. 9, 10:00 -11:00 a.m. and Phillippi Estate Park, Mar. 9, noon-1:00 p.m. (visit the Phillippi Farmhouse Market too)

PLANTING GUIDE
Vegetables & Herbs: Anise, basil, beans, beets, borage, cantaloupe, chervil, comfrey, corn, cucumber, cumin, kohlrabi, lemon balm, lettuce, marjoram, mustard, okra, oregano, peas, summer savory, sweet peppers, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, radish, summer squash, tarragon, thyme, tomatoes, and watermelon.
Perennials: African iris, Amazon lily, blood lily, blue daze, Caladium, Canna, Coreopsis, Crinum lily, daylily, Gaillardia, Gerbera daisy, Gaura, gloriosa lily, Mexican heather, milkweed, Pentas, Salvia, Shasta daisy, and society garlic.
Fruits in Season: Banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, lime, orange, and tangerine), jaboticaba, kumquat, loquat, strawberry, and papaya.
Blooming plants: Angel’s trumpet, azalea, blue flag iris, blue sage, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, cape honeysuckle, Carolina Jessamine, citrus, dwarf Indian hawthorn, flame vine, fuchsia skullcap, geranium, lantana, Mexican flame vine, Nemesia, orchid tree, purple Tabebuia, silk floss tree, society garlic, Surinam cherry, Walter’s Viburnum, and white bird of paradise.

Upcoming classes
Call 861-9900 or register on-line [sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu] for the following classes.
• Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard, Gulf Gate Library, 1:30 p.m. Mar. 4
• Organic Vegetable Gardening, Orange Blossom Community Garden, 18th & Orange, 1:00 p.m. Mar. 6
• Advanced Composting & Cover Crops, Warm Mineral Springs Spa, North Port, 8:30 a.m. Mar. 8
• Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard, St. Wilfred Episcopal Church, 4:00 p.m. Mar. 8
• Insect Pests of Woody Plants, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Mar. 9
• Irrigation 101, Longwood Park, 5:30 p.m. Mar. 14
• Companion Planting, Phillippi Estate Park, noon Mar. 16
• Life on a Senna: Discovering Biodiversity, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Mar. 16
• Ladybugs in Your Neighborhood, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. Mar. 17
• Rain Barrel Workshop & sale ($37), Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. Mar. 19
• Growing Herbs in Florida, Laurel Community Garden, 509 Collins Road, 10:30 a.m. Mar. 19
• Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard, Elsie Quirk Library, 10:00 a.m. Mar. 22
• Rain Barrel Workshop (no sales), Phillippi Estate Park, noon Mar. 23
• Partnering with Pollinators, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Mar. 23
• Make Your Homestead Firewise, Twin Lakes Park, 4:00 p.m. Mar. 23
• Growing Citrus in Your Home Landscape, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. Mar. 30
• Stinging Insects, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Mar. 30

GETTING HELP
The Master Gardener Help Desk is available to answer your questions, 861-9807, mghelpdesk@scgov.net. Walk-ins are welcome Monday-Friday from 9-Noon and 1-4 p.m., Twin Lakes Park, Clark Road east of I-75.
Satellite Help Desks: Weekly at four South County libraries and Gulf Gate Library and Phillippi Farmhouse Market, every 4th Saturday at Fruitville Library and every third Saturday at the Downtown Farmers’ Market, Sarasota.
New locations: every first Saturday at Lowe’s Sarasota, 10:00 a.m.-noon and Lowe’s Venice, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and every third Saturday at Lowe’s North Port, 10:00 a.m.-noon.

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