Butterfly Garden Tour

The garden has numbered posts around the surfaced outside that match the list below and is universally accessible. The flowers and plants are here for the butterflies and bees. Please leave them as you find them.

1. There are three interesting plants in front of you. The white wispy flowers are Cat’s whiskers whose leaves can be brewed for tea. The taller bush is a sweet almond whose flowers are a nectar source, especially for the Atala butterfly. The yellow flowers behind it are Yellow Alder or Buttercup. Watch for a black and yellow striped butterfly. It is the Zebra longwing, the State butterfly of Florida.

2. On the left is a Porter weed whose purple flowers are a favorite of several species of skipper butterflies. On the ground are Coontie plants (Zamia), the host plant for the Atala butterfly. Look for bright orange caterpillars. The taller bush in back is a Golden dewdrop. Look for its golden berries.

3. The yellow flowers are the Buttercups again. Watch around the large limestone rock for the Curly tail lizard or the Black spiny tailed iguana.

4. The raised bed contains the delicate red Gaura, commonly called the beeblossom. Two large matching trees in back are Ponytail Palms. You may see a small green lizard, the Carolina anole on their trunk. Its home has changed to the trees because of pressure from the invading Curlytails and iguanas.

5. Look behind you at the three large trees on the other side of the walk. These are Black Olive trees. They are highly tolerant to salt, insects, fungus, wind, and air pollution but their roots are able to dig up paving stones and damage foundations. Notice that the bark is ringed with small holes. Woodpeckers drill these holes and then visit them later when bugs have made the holes their home.

6. The understory of smaller plants can be identified by the color of their flowers: the purple on the left is Porter weed. The bright orange is milkweed, host plant for the Monarch butterfly. Look for caterpillars on its leaves. The small white flowers are wild Plumbago, a favorite of two small fast butterflies, the Cassius Blue and the Hairstreak.

7. The larger bushes from left to right are the tall Jasmine with its fragrant white clusters of flowers. Look for gold colored Ruddy
Daggerwings around the top. Next is the Hummingbird tree with its bright red flowers. Its fruit hangs down like long flat green beans. The yellow flowers to the right belong to the Necklace pod tree. Its seeds look like the pop together plastic children’s necklace.

8. Chase the lizard off the limestone in front of you and prop your foot on the rock to rest a moment. The brick bed contains Mint, Holy basil, a hot pepper, Rosemary, Rue and on the ground to your right, Spinach.

9. The trellis fence in front of you is covered with a vine called Dutchman’s Pipe because of the large pipe shape flower pod. Look for a large mottled brown flower the size of a plate. This vine is the host plant of the black gold rim Swallowtail. The bush on the left with the white patches is called the Snow bush. It is a favorite of the Polka-dot wasp moth caterpillars.

10. On the right are several Jamaican Capers. On the left are variegated Schefflera.

11. The low spiky plants to the right are Pineapples and actually produce fruit for us. The small white flowers with the yellow centers are Spanish needle. While their seeds tend to stick to your pants and socks, most butterflies like them for their nectar. Their leaves can be used to brew a tea.

12. The two small full trees in back are Chaya trees and the bushes with the purple seeds are Beautyberry. The berries are an important survival food for birds and other animals, though they will not eat them until other sources are depleted. The berries are bitter but are made into wine and jelly. The Beautyberry has been used as a folk remedy to prevent mosquito bites.

13. The bush on the left is a Surinam cherry whose bitter fruit is used as a flavoring. The leaves are spread on some house floors in Brazil, so that when crushed underfoot, they exude a smell which repels flies. The plant with dark leaves with the prominent ribs on the leaves is wild Coffee.

14. The tallest tree in this group is a purple Trumpet while the Firebush is the one with the bright orange flowers. Look closely under the Firebush branches and you will see some Spanish Moss that looks like a beard hanging down. Spanish moss has no roots and takes in nutrients and water through its leaves.

15. The bright yellow flowers are a Lantana while the purple flowers are the wild petunia, Ruellia, a favorite to the common Buckeye and Malachite butterflies.

16. The light green bushes in back are Firespike. To the left is a Roebelini palm with its sharp spikes. In the foreground are red Penta and Milkweed.