

Butterflies bring color and motion to garden

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



November 07, 2012



PHOTO BY Dr. William M. Johnson

Not satisfied with the occasional, chance appearance of butterflies, many gardeners are creating butterfly gardens with plants specifically chosen to invite them into the landscape and to please the human eye.



Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.

Butterflies are the gems of the insect world. Their graceful flight and bright colors never fail to delight children and adults alike including me.

Not satisfied with the occasional, chance appearance of butterflies, many gardeners are creating butterfly gardens — with plants specially chosen to invite them into the landscape.

Planning a butterfly garden might seem a bit intimidating if you're just getting started. While inspecting the sale yard layout the evening before the day of the 2012 Ornamental & Perennial Sale last month, I was as surprised as I was inspired by the number of butterflies that were visiting the container-grown plants even

though the sale yard had only been set up for a few hours.

The butterflies (and several hummingbirds) seemed to be saying: "You need not make it an overly complicated endeavor. We quickly came to this impromptu garden of container plants setting in a concrete parking lot. If you get the right plants, we will come in short order."

Butterfly gardens strive to attract, welcome and nurture these fascinating insects that add so much to the pleasures of gardening. And with their abundance of bright, colorful flowers, these gardens also can contribute to the beauty of the overall landscape.

This is understandable, since

the mixture of flowers and the fluttering movements of colorful butterflies are one of nature's most enchanting combinations. The fall gardening season provides an excellent opportunity to establish plants in your landscape.

In the complete butterfly garden, these plants are planted with the hope that butterflies will lay eggs on them and will serve as the food source for the developing caterpillars. This is one of the few situations I can think of where a gardener actually hopes a plant will be eaten by caterpillars.

Needless to say, use of insecticides should be avoided in areas dedicated to butterfly gardens.

more common.

Butterfly gardens strive to attract, welcome and nurture these fascinating and lovely insects that add so much to the pleasures of gardening. With their abundance of bright, colorful flowers, these gardens also can contribute to the beauty of the overall landscape.

