

GARDEN SPOT

Extend invitation to butterflies



MARTY FIGLEY

If this year you have decided to encourage butterflies to visit your garden, here are some quick tips that may help to "invite them in."

Butterflies like flowers with flat surfaces, especially in purple, yellow, pink and white colors. Some so-called weeds (or shall we call them wildflowers?) such as Queen Anne's lace, milkweed, clover and thistle are magnets for these creatures. Artemesias such as Silver King and Silver Queen also attract them.

An area protected by a hedge, wall or side of a house will add to their comfort. A shallow place such as a pan, birdbath or large scooped out rock filled with a constant water supply is desirable. A low natural spot in the garden that catches rain water (or water from your bucket) is another option.

Don't forget to include several flat stones so that they can rest. Beer or sugar water painted or sprayed on the stones provides a delicious treat!

We must be patient when we introduce a new type of garden such as this to our landscape. The creatures have to find it and feel comfortable in it before they will use it regularly. Before you begin, learn about the life cycle of caterpillars and butterflies so that you will be able to recognize them when they are in their caterpillar stage. I'm sure you won't want to destroy what may eventually become a delightful addition to your garden scene.

It's rewarding to know that homeowners are becoming more interested in protecting our wildlife and providing places of safety for them. The area needn't be large, but it will make a large impact on our environment.

Growing businesses

A lot of things are happening in the nursery business in Michigan! We are most fortunate to live in an area where new and innovative practices are tried. Many nurseries are expanding their facilities in order to serve you better.

For instance, I recently attended a ribbon cutting ceremony at Bordino Nursery Ltd. in Clarkston, where the Bordino family has been serving its customers since 1939. It was here

where the first retail venture began from a wood table set out by the road on Mother's Day. This nursery has certainly grown since that inauspicious beginning!

Bordino is one of several nurseries that is cooperating with Michigan State University in a research program to develop plants that will bloom their first season before they would normally bloom in a Michigan garden. This will enable customers to see the exact color and form of a perennial before purchase. By the time the second year rolls around the plants will bloom at their regular time.

Fourteen new greenhouses have been erected at the Bordino Clarkston facility to enable the staff to control the environment, such as light, humidity, heat, to achieve this goal. Sixty kinds of perennials have been "coerced" into this mode frame, said William Carlson of MSU. They have either been forced or held back so that they will be blooming when gardeners buy them.

Bob Theisen, perennial production director, is working with MSU in this regard.

Another exciting event is the expansion of Wiegand's Nursery on Romeo

Plank Road, Macomb County. This facility is just a short drive for our Rochester and Troy readers. A 10,000-square foot building is adjacent to the original structure and contains a 3,000-square foot glass greenhouse, and a 13,000-square foot bedding greenhouse that opens to the large sales yard.

"Our customers will realize that we are now one of the elite garden centers in the country," said Matt Jesus, Wiegand's garden center manager.

We are fortunate to have these forward-thinking businesses in our area.

TIMELY GARDEN TIPS

- Place grow-through supports over perennials.
- Before you destroy an insect in your garden, identify it. Use the proper procedures to destroy it.
- Analyze a site before planting: Shady? Sunny? Windy?
- Choose sturdy compact plants without bloom.
- Use an old plastic clothes basket for garden debris.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859.

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