



Prepared by
Wayne Porter
Area Horticulture Agent

Wayne Porter

Inside this issue:

**Ferns for Shady
Spots in Your Land-
scape 2**

**Simplified Turfgrass
Care 2**

**Hot Plants for Your
Garden 3**

**Reduce Weed Prob-
lems in your Vege-
table Garden 3**

**Green Flash –
News for
Horticulture
People**

Butterfly Gardening

Butterflies are beautiful to look at in the landscape. There is nothing more delightful than watching a small child observing and trying to catch a butterfly. Attracting them to the garden and getting them to stay and reproduce involves some advanced planning. Follow the steps outlined below to maximize your butterfly garden experience:



Choose a location that provides some protection from wind. Trees and shrubs that provide wind protection also provide a safe harbor from rain and predators. The garden should offer both sunny and partially sunny areas. There should be plentiful water for butterflies either in a shallow container or in an artificial mud puddle.

You need two types of plants in your garden: nectar plants and food plants. Adults feed on the nectar of many flowering trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals. There are many choices of plants that will meet diverse site requirements and personal preferences. In order to retain butterflies in your garden, you need certain plants to be available to serve as food plants for their young. Remember this and do not call me when some worms are eating your plants!

Here are a few hints to assist with this selection process:

1. Determine which species of butterfly is common in your area. Most species have very few plants on which the caterpillars will feed, so host plants need to be chosen carefully. For example, milkweed is a host plant for the monarch and wild carrot for some swallowtails.

2. In choosing nectar plants, select those that are native as they are lower maintenance, and less troublesome in the long run. Choose plants that have flowers in a variety of color, size, and shape. Different butterflies like to feed at different elevations, so choose shrubs, perennials, and annuals of varying heights. In order to have nectar available throughout the time when the butterflies occur, include plants that bloom throughout the year. (continued on page 4)

Green Calendar

- * April 18 - Gardening for Birds and Butterflies, local extension offices
- * April 19 - Coastal Area Landscape Symposium, MGCCC, Wiggins
- * April 26 - Pinebelt Master Gardeners Spring Garden Day, Hattiesburg
- * May 11 - East Mississippi Master Gardener Plant Sale , Meridian
- * May 16 - Everything is Coming up Roses, local extension offices
- * June 20 - Daylilies. . . Summer Flowers with Pizzazz!!, local extension offices

Ferns for Shady Spots in Your Landscape

When trying to grow plants in shady areas of your landscape, consider growing some of the hardy ferns. The leaves of ferns, called fronds, provide the primary ornamental feature of the plants. There is great variation in color and texture of the fronds. Different species of ferns range in size from less than a foot to as tall as 3 feet.

Ferns are so easy to grow. They are not prone to any major insect or disease problems. Ferns will grow best in areas that receive one to four hours of direct morning sun or dappled light during the day. Ferns do prefer moist areas, and may need irrigation during hot, dry summer months. Incorporate generous

amounts of organic matter during bed preparation and keep the ferns well mulched. Avoid hot, dry areas that receive several hours of direct sun in the afternoon, or areas that receive sun all day.

Some excellent ferns for use in the landscape include maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-vernus*), holly fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*), leatherleaf fern (*Rumohra adiantiformis*), sword fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), autumn fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*, known for its coppery red new

fronds), lady fern (*Athyrium filixfemina*), southern shield fern (*Thelypteris kunthii*), lace fern (*Microlepia strigosa*), and sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*). Note: southern shield fern will tolerate a lot of sun.



Simplified Turfgrass Care

Lawns now show spring re-growth. Be careful not to push the season by forcing early growth with lots of fertilizer. If fertilizer is put on too early, it will feed winter weeds and not the turf. A good rule of thumb is to mow your lawn once or twice before fertilizing.

Beginning in April in the coastal counties and moving northward through May, all warm-season grasses should be in actively growing. This is when to begin fertilizing your lawns. Turf fertilizers with 4-1-2 ratio are preferred unless a soil test shows otherwise.

You may start with a complete fertilizer like 13-13-13 if you know your soil phosphorus is low. Use 8 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. If you have bermudagrass, zoysiagrass or St. Augustinegrass, after the

first application, use just a nitrogen fertilizer at a rate of one-half to 1 pound of pure nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. every five to six weeks until midsummer.

On centipede and carpetgrass lawns apply N fertilizer only one more time in midseason if you live in the lower half of Mississippi.

Use only 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. for this.

If you wish to dethatch or power rake this year, wait until late spring when the turf is vigorously growing. Large dead areas are probably die-outs from winter kill or fall brown patch disease. Treat the yellow, actively diseased areas with fungicides like PCNB, iprodione, triadimefon, mancozeb, cap-



tan, thiophate-methyl, etc.

Cutting heights are important for healthy grass. Cutting grasses that need to be left tall is a common mistake. Choose the higher cut for grass in shade. Sharpen your mower blade before the season and at least once a month too. Replace old oil with new and stale gas with fresh before you start your mower this spring.

Recommended cutting heights for the different turfgrasses are: common bermudagrass, 1½ inches; hybrid bermudagrass, 1-inch; zoysiagrass, 1-1½ inches; centipede/carpetgrass, 1½ - 2 inches; St. Augustinegrass, 2½-3 inches. For shady areas raise the mower deck another ½ inch for all species.

Hot Plants for Your Garden: 'Mini Penny' Hydrangea

'Mini Penny' hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) was selected by Dr. Michael Dirr and named for Penny McHenry, founder of the American Hydrangea Society. Unlike most hydrangeas, this one blooms on both old and new growth. So if late winter freezes kill the flower buds or your gardener cuts them off, it will bloom anyway and continue through summer. This re-blooming mophead features inflorescences ranging 4-6 inches wide. Acid soil gives you powder blue flowers; alkaline soil turns them pink. Put this plant in part shade with well-drained soil containing lots of organic matter. 'Mini Penny' is compact, slowly growing 3 to 4 feet tall and wide. Its small, dark green leaves are resistant to powdery mildew. It is perfect for small gardens or containers.



'Mini Penny' hydrangea

Reduce Weed Problems in Your Vegetable Garden

Each year many gardens are abandoned because they get over-taken by weeds. One week there is nothing but a few tiny green sprigs and you decide to wait until they get larger; then you get a week of rain; then you go on vacation for a week; then you get another week of rain. When you next look at your garden, it resembles a jungle and it is 95 degrees to boot. So you make a new garden resolution to do better next year.

Why not start with this year's garden and apply an herbicide (weed killer) to keep some of those pesky weeds from coming up? While no herbicide will prevent all weeds, they can sure make things easier for the gardener.

There are not many herbicides available to homeowners for use in their vegetable garden but one that is available is trifluralin. It is a pre-emergent herbicide, meaning that it is applied to kill weeds before weeds or crops appear. Trifluralin is sold under numerous trade names including Treflan, Preen, Trilin, and others.

Trifluralin comes in granular and liquid forms. You can punch holes in the lid of a jar to apply the granular form of trifluralin. Use 11 to 16 tablespoons of 5 percent granular material per 1,000 square feet of garden. Use a sprinkling can to apply the liquid trifluralin. For each 1,000 square feet of garden, use 2 to

3 level teaspoons of liquid formulation. Apply half while walking in one direction and the other half while walking in the opposite direction. No single herbicide will control weeds in all vegetable crops. If you apply too little, some parts of your garden will have more weeds; if you apply too much, you can damage your vegetables.

When you finish applying trifluralin, thoroughly mix the top two inches of soil with a rake or a rotary cultivator for best results. If you don't have one, irrigate the soil $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. Plant vegetables any time up to a month after you apply trifluralin.

You can plant or transplant these vegetables: snap beans, lima beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, collards, kale, mustard greens, okra, English peas, and southern peas into areas where trifluralin has been applied. For tomatoes, peppers, or eggplants use with transplants only.

Store trifluralin in its original container. Do not store with food, drugs or clothing. Do not freeze or store near heat or flame. Always read and follow the directions on the manufacturer's label.

410 Constitution Ave, 5th Floor
Meridian, MS 39301

Phone: 601- 482-9764

Fax: 601- 482- 9777

E-mail: wporter@ext.msstate.edu



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION SERVICE

Keep up with breaking gardening news:
'Wayne's World of Gardening in Mississippi'
at
www.gardeninginms.blogspot.com



Question Box: Have a specific question? E-mail me at:
wporter@ext.msstate.edu

Discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated. Discrimination based upon sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.

Butterfly Gardening (continued from page 1)

3. Place larger plants in the background with smaller plants layered toward the foreground. When planting smaller annuals and perennials, group them in masses to better attract the butterflies.

4. Consider placing host plants in an area that is close to the nectar plants, but not in the focal point of your garden. Host plants can get quite ragged looking from hungry caterpillars!

Regular fertilization and irrigation will help keep garden plants blooming and healthy. Healthy plants are less susceptible to disease and pests. Avoid pesticides as they may harm butterflies and other beneficial insects. Never use a Bt or systemic insecticide since these target insect larva including butterflies. Lower risk oils or soaps

are useful in treating localized insect infestations.

Once the planting is complete, there are several enhancements you can include in your butterfly garden. Add a rock or log in a sunny spot where butterflies can rest and sun themselves. Do not forget to add a comfortable place for you to sit and enjoy the your garden and the butterflies!

For more information on butterfly gardening and for a plant list, please check www.msucare.com/pubs for **IS1661 Butterfly Plants**

Vegetable Planting

... in April

Plant snap beans, butter beans, radishes, cucumbers, eggplants, cantaloupes, okra, southern peas, peanuts, summer squash, sweet

corn, sweet potatoes (late April), tomatoes and peppers (transplants) and watermelons.

... in May

Plant sweet potatoes (transplants), okra, Southern peas, pumpkins, peanuts, sweet corn, watermelons, cucumbers, butter beans, squash, cantaloupes, and eggplants (transplants), snap beans, butter beans, sweet corn, tomatoes and peppers (transplants) should be planted in the early days of May to prevent poor fruit set due to high temperatures in mid-summer.

... and in June: Transplant heat-set tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and sweet potato slips. You also can plant, cucumbers, melons, cantaloupes, okra, southern peas, and summer squash. Start seed of fall tomatoes and bell peppers.