



Butterfly fun

Australian butterflies

There are about 400 species of butterfly in Australia. There are 24 butterfly species native to Melbourne. Victorian Skipper and Brown Butterflies are common – see what you can find in your garden.

Food

Butterflies feed on the nectar in flowers. Native plants like grevillea and bottlebrush will attract native butterflies to the garden. Caterpillars feed on host plants including groundcovers, grasses and shrubs.

How they feed

Butterflies drink nectar by dipping their straw-like tongue in flowers. It's called a proboscis. Petals of daisies make great landing pads.

Flowers all year

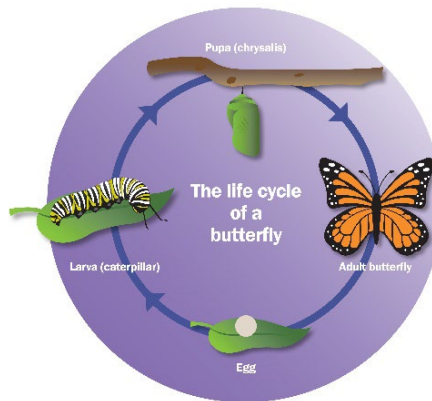
To attract butterflies to your garden plant a variety of native plants which will produce flowers at different times of the year.

Colour and scent

Attracted by scent and colour, butterflies prefer yellow, orange, blue, violet, purple or white flowers.

Life cycle

Butterflies begin life as a baby caterpillar that hatches out of an egg. Caterpillars hatch from an egg and eat through leaves. They hang from a leaf and form a cocoon, staying in the cocoon for around 7 days. When they emerge, they stretch their wings out to dry, and fly off as a butterfly. They feed on flowers, mate, lay eggs on a leaf, and the cycle continues.



Caterpillars

Caterpillars emerge from the egg so hungry that they can spend their first five days eating – the whole time! They transform into butterflies after time in a cocoon. This is called metamorphosis.

Butterfly wings

Butterfly wings have a range of colours made from tiny colourful scales that cover their wings and bodies. Don't touch butterflies! These scales can come off their wings like dust. They can still fly but will not look nice when finding a mate.

Butterflies also flap their wings five times per second.



Butterfly fun fact

Butterflies taste with their feet. Their taste sensors are located in the feet, and by standing on their food, they can taste it!

Citizen science

You can be a 'citizen scientist' and record butterflies you see at <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/>. You can do this from your own back yard with your family members, or at school with your teacher or other students.

