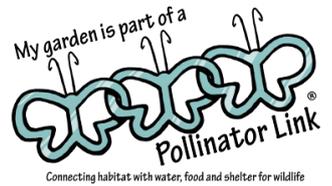


Plant Locals to Feed Locals



Want more butterflies and birds in your garden?

350 butterfly and moth caterpillars found on local native plants for every 10 caterpillars found on exotic plants.

Bringing Nature Home – Tallamy 2012

Plant local natives to provide food for local insects.



Butterflies can be very selective about what they eat. Some butterfly species are totally dependent on only one plant species. For example, caterpillars of the Orange Ringlet butterfly *Hypocysta adianta* only feed on Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*.

Ninety-six percent of terrestrial birds rear their young on insects, with juicy butterfly and moth caterpillars the largest component of their diet. Plant natives for insects and birds will bring their families to visit.

What is different about local natives?

Douglas Tallamy, in his book Bringing Nature Home, reports that **90% of insect herbivores are specialist eaters** able to digest only a very limited range of plant species.

Leaf chemistry is the key to fussy insect feeding.

The basic growth function common to all plants is using energy from the sun to convert carbon dioxide to new plant tissue. This is the source of food for ourselves and and creatures that eat plants.

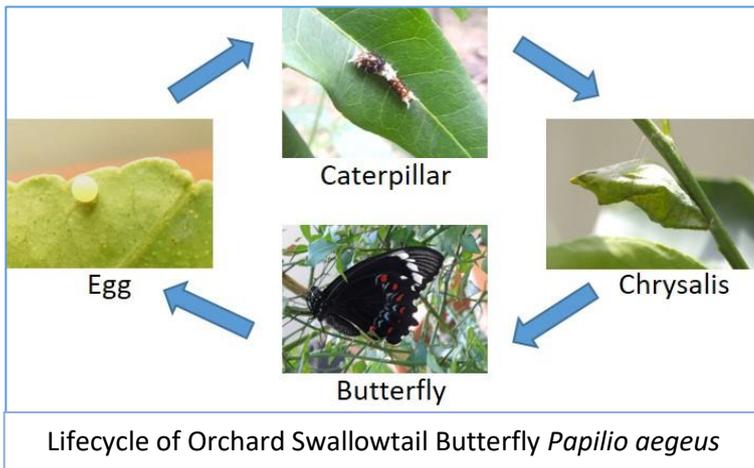
Over thousands of years each plant has also evolved its own unique mix of nasty chemicals to defend against insect herbivores. Defence chemicals may include:

- Glycosides that release extremely poisonous hydrogen cyanide when a leaf is chewed.
- Phenols like tannins that give the leaves a bitter taste.
- Powerful alkaloids that are used to make narcotic analgesics like morphine and codeine.



Over the same thousands of years, insects have evolved the special enzymes needed to detoxify and safely consume the defence chemicals in a small number of plants growing in the same local area, or in some cases, just one plant. To maintain a healthy habitat and bring birds and butterflies back to our city gardens it is vital to plant local natives for local insects.

How do you feel about caterpillars on your citrus trees?



Do you automatically reach for the insect spray when you find a caterpillar on your plant?

Caterpillars leaving your plants looking a little ragged can be frustrating. However, before you reach for the eco “bee-friendly” spray, remember that you may be killing the very butterflies you want in your garden.

Invite nature’s pest controllers into your garden

Caterpillars as Food

If you can tolerate some chewed leaves you will be providing year-round food to maintain a **team of free specialist pest controllers**. The Orange Caterpillar Parasite Wasp attacks caterpillars of the *Helicoverpa* moth species. These caterpillars are a serious pest in your vegetable garden, feeding on tomatoes, beans, lettuce and zucchini, and your geraniums.

Many of the small birds we love, like the Variegated Fairy Wren *Malurus lamberti*, love caterpillars for lunch, especially when feeding their chicks.

Build a three-dimensional garden

Create a habitat that provides **Food and Shelter** for a diversity of pest controlling wildlife like birds, lizards, spiders, mantids and lady beetles.

Crusader Bug *Mictis profana* can do significant damage to new shoots on citrus by piercing new growth with their sucking mouthparts. Well named as stink bugs, they use the plant’s secondary metabolic compounds to brew a foul-smelling mix they release when threatened.

A three-dimensional garden typically has trees, shrubs and vines providing a variety of food and safe places to shelter.

