



# *Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail®*

## *Container Garden Ideas*

Container gardens can provide a habitat for the full life cycle of butterflies in a small space. It is important to select nectar producing plants that provide a burst of color to attract butterflies. Select host plants for the type of butterfly you want to attract. The female will lay eggs, and then the leaves will provide food for the caterpillars. Native plants free of chemicals are the best choice when you select your nectar and host plants. Monarch butterflies only lay eggs on butterfly weed and milkweed.

Some of the benefits of a butterfly garden in a container include: creativity in mixing plants in containers for a focal point for a small area, easier to maintain, less expensive than a large garden, and a great way to provide habitat while enjoying nature.

### **Things to consider:**

**Drainage** - The container needs drainage holes so water is able to drain. Rocks in the bottom or using large coffee filters can help hold in soil and allow drainage in your container. If the container is placed on a flat surface, make sure the drainage holes are not blocked.

**Material** – Plastic, resin and glazed terra cotta containers hold in moisture better with less evaporation through the walls than a porous container. Water reservoirs in self-watering pots help deliver water to plants as needed.

**Size** – Small containers will dry out quicker than large ones. Unglazed terra cotta pots may need watering multiple times on a hot, sunny day. Using a nonporous plastic pot as a liner will help retain moisture. Check your soil moisture before watering; too much water can harm your plants.

**Soil** - A high quality potting soil is best and will drain well.

**Planting** – Avoid overcrowding plants! Consider the plants mature size and select a container accordingly. Overcrowded containers can lead to root bound plants and disease problems. Place plants at the same height as they were in the ground or nursery pot. Refer to plant depth on seed packages for best germination.

**Care of Container gardens** - Plants growing in a container will need more frequent watering and fertilizer than in-ground garden plants. This is due to the roots being confined and limited nutrients from the soil.

**Pest and Disease** – Check your plants for problems regularly. Avoid using chemicals on plants that can cause problems for all pollinators. Your local County Cooperative Extension Agent will be able to recommend solutions to problems as well as plants that thrive in your area.

*We hope you will consider joining the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail and our efforts to provide habitat for butterflies common in your area. For additional information about the trail go to*  
[www.rosalynncarterbutterflytrail.org](http://www.rosalynncarterbutterflytrail.org)

