

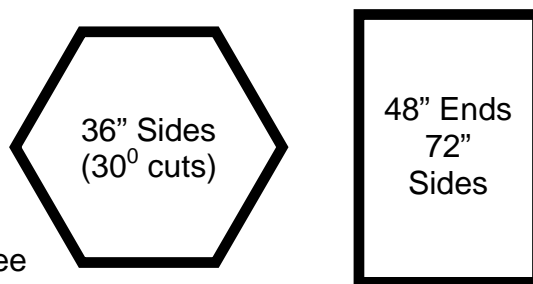
Compact Butterfly & Hummingbird Planter¹

The following directions describe the construction of a small, raised-bed planter for use in growing butterfly and/or hummingbird plants. This compact planter is easy to construction and may serve as a starter project for school, business or home use or can be the basis of a larger project. The small size allows flexibility in that it is small enough to be placed in a wide variety of locations, is easy to move if needed, and can be easily disassembled. Big is not always best in developing butterfly gardens and beginners are often tempted to create a large bed or many beds that may be hard to maintain. This is particularly true for school projects that are often neglected in the summer months and fall into disuse with time. This small design is much easier to maintain and will achieve all of the goals and objectives of attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, or both. Two basic layouts are illustrated using the same amount of material, but other variations are also possible. Total cost is under \$100.

Materials:

- 2, 10-foot long, 2" x 12" treated boards
- 12-18, 16 penny (4-in long) galvanized nails
- Newspaper (used as weed barrier)
- Approximately 20 cubic feet top soil
- 1 large bag peat moss (4 cubic ft)
- Slow release fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10)
- 1 bale pine straw
- 10-15 butterfly and/or hummingbird plants (see list below)

Planter Design Options:



Construction and Setup:

- 1) Choose a planter design (see illustration) and cut boards to specifications
- 2) Assemble all boards using galvanized nails
- 3) Place assembled planter in desired location making sure that the site is level (see notes on choosing a site). NOTE: it is not necessary to remove grass from the site, as the newspaper weed barrier will prevent grass from growing through.
- 4) Create an eight-layer thick weed barrier with newspaper, allowing plenty of overlap between sheets and extending the paper about halfway up the boards on all sides.
- 5) Using a wheel barrow or large container, mix the topsoil and peat moss thoroughly using about 1 part peat moss with 4 parts soil and place in the planter.
- 6) Layout the plants selected for use in the planter and adjust placement as needed based on reported maximum sizes for those species that are used.
- 7) Plant each plant, adding a suitable amount of fertilizer to the soil in the hole (follow the label directions on rate of application) and water thoroughly.
- 8) Carefully place the pine straw between and around the plants in the planter.

(Over)

¹ Compiled by Mark W. LaSalle for Audubon Mississippi.

Selection a Site:

Most of the plants listed below are tolerant of most types of sun exposure (e.g., morning, mid-day and afternoon sun). Site selection is, therefore, largely a matter of avoiding too much shade, such as between closely spaced buildings or placement too close to the north side of buildings where sun exposure tends to be lowest. The only other key factor relative to site selection is the proximity of a water source such as a water spigot. Try an avoid being more than 30-40 feet from a spigot such that a 50-ft hose will suffice to deliver water to your plants.

Suggested Plant Species:

A number of native and non-native plants may attract both butterflies and hummingbirds and many garden centers stock some of both. Although Audubon promotes the use of native species, availability of many is limited, in large part, due to market factors that favor ornamental forms and varieties. Although these species are visited and used by butterflies and hummingbirds, we recommend that native species be used whenever possible. More frequent promotion and use of natives will help to drive the market toward better availability of these species. Ask for them and encourage your local garden centers to stock natives.

A few of the more commonly available native plants are listed below, along with their key characteristics. Most of these species may be visited by butterflies and hummingbirds. For the commonly occurring and migratory ruby-throated hummingbird, many of these plants are important sources of nectar during their spring or fall migrations. Many of these same plants having blooming periods that extend well into late fall and early winter and are important food plants for western hummers that drift eastward in fall and winter (particularly the sages). Plant selection is largely a matter of taste for colors and plant sizes that should be considered when placing plants in the planters. Large plants should be placed in the center or back of the planters (when planters are placed against a wall). The species listed are native to the southeastern or southwestern United States and these recommendations are based on Audubon's focus on promoting native species.

Species	Max Size	Flower Color	Blooming
Texas Sage, <i>Salvia coccinea</i>	8-12 inches	Red	Year round
Autumn Sage, <i>Salvia greggii</i>	24 inches	Red	Year round
Firecracker Plant, <i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	2-3 feet	Scarlet	Summer/fall
Firebush, <i>Hamelia patens</i>	6-8 feet	Red	Summer/fall
Turks Cap, <i>Malvaviscus arboreus</i>	2-3 feet	Red	Year round
Bee Balm, <i>Monardia didyma</i>	3-4 feet	Orange	Summer/fall
Spotted Jewelweed, <i>Impatiens capensis</i>	3-4 feet	Orange	Summer/fall
Cardinal Flower, <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	2-3 feet	Red	Fall
Coneflowers, <i>Echinacea</i> spp.	2-3 feet	Yellow/Purple	Summer
Black-Eyed Susans, <i>Rudbeckia</i> spp	2-3 feet	Yellow	Summer