Butterfly Garden Adventure

Wander the Harriet K. Maxwell Desert Wildflower Loop trail to discover how butterflies use plants to eat, grow and survive in their life cycle.

**Host Plants**
*Find plants that caterpillars can eat.*
Caterpillars have two jobs: to eat and grow. The plant they eat is called their host plant; it’s the only plant the caterpillars can eat to survive. Monarch caterpillars rely on their host plant, the milkweed. This is where monarch butterflies lay their eggs.

*If you could only eat one thing, what would it be?*

**Nectar Plants**
*Find flowering plants that provide nectar.*
Adult butterflies drink nectar from flowers through their straw-like tongue called a proboscis. They use their antennae and super color vision to find blooms. Flat, clustered flowers that are easier to land on are their favorite.

*Use your senses. What colors do you see? Describe what you smell.*

**Shelter Plants**
*Find leafy, shady plants that can provide shelter.*
Shelter plants are trees or shrubs that can protect butterflies from wind, rain and predators. Butterflies need shelter plants at all stages of their life. Caterpillars often find a shelter plant when they are ready to form their chrysalis.

*Look at the plants around you. Where would you want to hide?*

**Did you know?**
*Did you see a butterfly or caterpillar? Sometimes they are hard to spot.*
Camouflage helps insects like butterflies blend into their surroundings, or tricks predators into thinking they are something they are not. One example: Giant Swallowtail caterpillars look like bird poop. They can hide in plain sight thanks to this clever disguise.

*What would your camouflage look like?*

**Draw Your Own Butterfly Garden**
*Use what you learned today to imagine your own butterfly garden at home. Find the downloadable activity on the next page!*
Draw Your Own Butterfly Garden

Use what you learned to create your own butterfly garden. Remember: butterflies need nectar, shelter and host plants to survive. Don’t forget to add your own beautiful butterflies too!