

## Let's Talk About B&B's - By Caryl Davies



From the title of this article, you might think we're going to discuss Bed and Breakfast's but no... let's hop into Spring and talk about Bees and Butterflies!

Let's start with bees. Found anywhere there are flowers, there are 4,000 native bee species in the United States. They do the bulk of the work pollinating up to 80% of flowering plants. Honey bees by contrast were actually brought to America by European settlers and do poorly pollinating native plants. No matter the type of bee, they truly keep our world producing the food we eat, and ensure flowers are pollinated.

And who does not love Butterflies? These graceful and delicate beauties come in about 17,500 different species around the world with about 750 of those here in the United States. Watching them evolve from an egg to larva to pupa and on to the winged adult captivates children (and adults). Butterflies are also pollinators and integral to our food system.

What do these B's have in common? Plants of course! Without Bees and Butterflies to pollinate, many plant species would dramatically decrease, and our choice of foods would become severely restricted. What can you do? Installing a variety of native plants that bloom from early spring to late fall will attract these flying friends. Planting in clumps help them find the plants. And please... NO pesticides! Learn more about what you can do to protect and encourage pollinators by visiting [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org). For those in Las Vegas, keep your eyes open for the Springs Preserve Butterfly Habitat (open usually during the months of April and May). Looking for a list of plants that encourage butterflies? The Springs Preserve has a great list. <https://www.springspreserve.org/assets/pdf/butterfly-habitat-host-plants.pdf>. Enjoy the wonders of Spring!



*"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party!'"*  
~ Robin Williams

## Favorite Flora:

### Buddleja marrubifolia - Woolly Butterfly Bush - By SLA



This month's favorite flora is an underutilized drought tolerant medium-sized shrub that deserves more attention. A native of the Chihuahuan Desert this desert native can take it all. From drought to heat to intense sunlight and reflected heat nothing seems to bother this shrub. This patio and pool friendly shrub grows up to around 5 feet high and wide and has grayish green leaves that are elliptical. The leaves are covered with fine white hairs which gives it a soft fuzzy look. As the common name indicates the Woolly Butterfly Bush attracts butterflies and other nectar loving species such as hummingbirds and bees. They're attracted to the large marble-sized, orange, globe shaped flowers that appear from late spring to late summer.

The Buddleja marrubifolia likes well drained soils, full sun, and needs little supplemental water once established making it a great choice for xeric landscapes. If overwatered the Woolly Butterfly Bush will become floppy and become subject to root rot. Also avoid heavy clay soils. Some may find its lack of formal growth habit frustrating and be tempted to shear it into a box, ball, or drum into a more formal shape. As with many desert shrubs this will cause the plant to stress and flower less, if at all. It's best left natural. The best time to prune it is in the fall. Shape as needed and remove dead or damaged wood. Every 3 years or so cut it back to within a foot or two of the ground to reinvigorate the shrub. Plant it in groups for an informal hedge or as an open and airy accent around pools or other water features. Pair it with other desert adapted plants such as Damainita (Chrysactinia Mexicana), Ruellia (Ruellia peninsularis), Texas Rangers (Leucophyllum frutescens), and Blackfoot Daisy (Melanopodium leucanthum) to set off the color contrast of foliage and flowers.



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