

Northern Arizona Butterfly Host Plants



This is not a comprehensive list of Northern Arizona's butterfly species. It includes some of the species more likely to be observed in Sedona, the Verde Valley and Flagstaff. Species typically found in higher elevations are noted with an asterisk (*). Species that may be found in most elevations in our region are noted with a pound sign (#). All other species listed are typically low elevation species. Due to multiple host plants for many butterfly species, only the plant's botanical genus is listed for many butterflies, not specific plant species names. This information was compiled by Becky Hardy in March 2026, using the following reference sources: *Butterflies of the Central Arizona Highlands* by Philip McNally PhD; *Field Guide to Butterflies of North America* by Jim P. Brock & Kenn Kaufman; *A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America* by Jeffrey Glassberg; ButterfliesandMoths.org.

Species	Flight Period	Host Plants (Common and Botanical Names)
Swallowtail (Papilionidae)		
Pipeline Swallowtail	May-July	Pipevines (<i>Aristolochia</i> spp.)
Black Swallowtail	Feb-Oct	Turpentine broom (<i>Thamnosma montana</i>), Parsley family (<i>Apiaceae</i> spp.)
Western Tiger Swallowtail*	May-July	Cottonwoods (<i>Populus</i> spp.), Ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.), Chokecherry (<i>Prunus</i> spp.), Aspen (<i>Populus</i> spp.), Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.)
Two-tailed Swallowtail	Mar-Oct	Sycamore (<i>Plantanus</i> spp.), Ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.), Chokecherry (<i>Prunus</i> spp.), Hoptree (<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>)
Whites and Sulphurs (Pieridae)		
Pine White*	June-Sept	Ponderosa pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>), Pinon pine (<i>Pinus edulis</i>), Douglas fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)
Sara Orangetip	Feb-Apr	Mustards (<i>Brassicaceae</i> spp.), Rock Cress (<i>Arabis</i> spp.), Shepard's Purse (<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>), Radish (<i>Raphanus</i> spp.)
Checkered White	Mar-Oct	Mustards (<i>Brassicaceae</i> spp.), Rock Cress (<i>Arabis</i> spp.), Shepard's Purse (<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>), Radish (<i>Raphanus</i> spp.)
Cabbage White	Mar-Oct	Mustards (<i>Brassicaceae</i> spp.), Cole Crops (<i>Brassica</i> spp.)
Clouded Sulphur#	Apr-Oct	Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Orange Sulphur#	Feb-Nov	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Lupines (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Queen Alexandra's Sulphur*	May-Aug	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.) and others in the legumes family
Southern Dogface	Mar-Oct	False Indigo (<i>Amorpha</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.)
Cloudless Sulphur	June-Nov	Senna (<i>Senna</i> spp.)
Mexican Yellow#	Mar-Nov	Acacia (<i>Acacia</i> spp.), Locust (<i>Robinia</i> spp.) and others in the legumes family
Sleepy Orange	Spring-Fall	Senna (<i>Senna</i> spp.)
Dainty Sulphur	May-Nov	Aster family (<i>Asteraceae</i>), Marigold (<i>Tagetes</i> spp.), Dogweed (<i>Dyssodia</i> spp. and <i>Adenophyllum</i> spp.), Cosmos (<i>Cosmos</i> spp.)
Gossamer-Winged (Lycaenidae) - Blues and Hairstreaks		
Western Pygmy-Blue#	Mar-Nov	Amaranth family (<i>Amaranthus</i>), Russian Thistle (<i>Salsola</i> spp.), Saltbush (<i>Atriplex</i> spp.), Goosefoot (<i>Chenopodium</i> spp.)
Spring Azure*	Feb-June	Chokecherry (<i>Prunus</i> spp.), Fernbush (<i>Chamaebatiaria millefolium</i>)
Ceraunus Blue	Spring-Fall	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Mesquite (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Whiteball Acacia (<i>Acaciella augustissima</i>)
Reakirt's Blue#	Mar-Sept	Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Mesquite (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Whitethorn Acacia (<i>Vachellia constricta</i>)
Marine Blue#	Apr-Oct	Mesquite (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.) False Indigo (<i>Amorpha</i> spp.), Catclaw Acacia (<i>Acacia greggii</i>)
Western-tailed Blue*	Apr-Aug	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Silvery Blue*	Apr-June	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Lupines (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Lupine Blue#	Apr-Oct	Buckwheats (<i>Eriogonum</i> spp.), Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Lupines (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Greenish Blue*	Apr-Aug	Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.)
Melissa Blue*	June-Sept	Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), Lupines (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.), Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>), Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)
Arctic Blue*	Apr-Aug	Primrose family (<i>Primulaceae</i> spp.)
Juniper Hairstreak	Mar-Sept	Junipers (<i>Juniperus</i> spp.) and Incense Cedars
Great Purple Hairstreak	Mar-Nov	Mistletoes (<i>Phoradendron</i> and <i>Arceuthobium</i> spp.)
Leda Ministreak	Apr-Oct	Mesquite (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.)
Gray Hairstreak#	Mar-Nov	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>), Legumes family (<i>Fabaceae</i>), Deerbrush (<i>Ceanothus integerrimus</i>)
Brown Elfin#	Mar-May	Manzanita (<i>Arcotostaphylos</i> spp.), Deerbrush (<i>Ceanothus integerrimus</i>)
Western Pine Elfin*	May-July	Ponderosa pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>), Douglas fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)
Thicket Hairstreak*	March-July	Pine mistletoe

Brush-footed (Nymphalidae)

Palmer's Metalmark	Apr-Oct	Mesquite (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.)
Fatal Metalmark	Mar-Nov	Seep willow (<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>)
Gulf Fritillary	June-Oct	Passion Flower (<i>Passiflora</i> spp.)
Variegated Fritillary	All year possible	Passion Vine (<i>Passiflora</i> spp.), Spiderlings (<i>Boerhavia</i> spp.), Violets (<i>Viola</i> spp.), Flax family
Atlantis Fritillary*	May-Aug	Violets (<i>Viola</i> spp.)
California Tortoiseshell	Mar-Oct	Buckbrush (<i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i>)
Sagebrush Checkerspot	Apr-Oct	Aster family (<i>Asteraceae</i>), rabbitbrush (<i>Ericameria</i> spp.)
Elada Checkerspot	Apr-Oct	Acanthus family (<i>Acanthaceae</i>) and Mexican Honeysuckle (<i>Justicia spicigera</i>)
Mylitta Crescent	June-July	Thistle family (<i>Cirsium</i> , <i>Carduus</i> , and <i>Onopordum</i> spp.), Monkey Flower (<i>Mimulus</i> spp.)
Field Crescent	May-Aug	Aster family (<i>Asteraceae</i>)
Painted Lady#	Several months	Aster family (<i>Asteraceae</i>), Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>), Borages family (<i>Boraginaceae</i>), Fiddleneck (<i>Amsinckia</i> spp.)
West Coast Lady#	Mar-Oct	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>)
American Lady#	All year possible	Thistle family (<i>Cirsium</i> , <i>Carduus</i> , and <i>Onopordum</i> spp.)
Red Admiral	All year possible	Nettle family (<i>Urticaceae</i>)
Mourning Cloak#	All year possible	Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), Cottonwoods (<i>Populus</i> spp.), Birches (<i>Betula</i> spp.), Quaking Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>), Hackberries (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
Arizona Sister	Apr-Oct	Oaks (<i>Quercus</i> spp.)
Weidemeyer's Admiral*	June-Aug	Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), Quaking Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>), Chokecherry (<i>Prunus</i> spp.)
Red-spotted Admiral#	June-Aug	Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), Quaking Aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i>), Chokecherry (<i>Prunus</i> spp.), Cottonwoods (<i>Populus</i> spp.)
Question Mark	Mar-Oct	Hackberries (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
Hoary Comma	Mar-Sept	Currants (<i>Ribes</i> spp.)
Satyr Comma#	Mar-Sept	Nettle family (<i>Urticaceae</i>), Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.)
Common Buckeye#	Mar-Nov	Monkey flower (<i>Mimulus</i> spp.), snapdragons (<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>), dalmatian toadflax (<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>) and others in the Plantain family
Viceroy	Apr-Sept	Willows (<i>Salix</i> spp.), Cottonwoods (<i>Populus</i> spp.)
Monarch#	Apr-Nov	Milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> Spp.)
Queen	Apr-Nov	Milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> Spp.) and Dogbane (<i>Funastrum</i> Spp.)
Hackberry Emperor	Apr-Oct	Hackberries (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)
American Snout	Apr-Oct	Hackberries (<i>Celtis</i> spp.)

Skippers (Hesperiidae)

Many skipper host plants are oaks and various grasses, therefore most skipper species are not listed below. Instead, many of the skippers that have host plants other than grasses are listed below.

Silver-spotted Skipper#	May-July	Locust (<i>Robinia</i> spp.), False Indigo (<i>Amorpha</i> spp.)
Northern Cloudywing*	Apr-Sept	Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> and <i>Melilotus</i> spp.), False Indigo (<i>Amorpha</i> spp.)
Golden-headed Scallopwing	Feb-Sept	Pigweeds (<i>Amaranthus</i> spp.)
Arizona Powdered-Skipper	Mar-Sept	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>)
Northern White-Skipper	Mar-Oct	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>)
Common Checkered-Skipper#	Mar-Oct	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>), Cheeseweed (<i>Malva parviflora</i>)
Mountain Checkered-Skipper*	May-June	Cinquefoils (<i>Potentilla</i> spp.)
Common Streaky-Skipper	Mar-Sept	Mallow family (<i>Malvaceae</i>)
Common Sootywing	Mar-Sept	Pigweeds (<i>Amaranthus</i> spp.), Amaranth family (<i>Amaranthus</i>)
Saltbush Sootywing	Apr-Sept	Four-wing Saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>)
Yucca Giant-Skipper	Mar-Apr	Banana Yucca (<i>Yucca baccata</i>)
Rocky Mountain Duskywing*	Mar-July	Primarily Gambel Oak (<i>Quercus gambelii</i>)
Funereal Duskywing#	Mar-Oct	Locust (<i>Robinia</i> spp.), Deervetch (<i>Lotus</i> spp.), Burclover (<i>Medicago</i> spp.)
Afranius Duskywing	May-Aug	Lupines (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.), Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> spp.), Milkvetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)

For more information about Butterfly Enthusiasts of Northern Arizona (BENA), visit our website at www.butterflyenthusiastsofnaz.org.

Questions? Email us at info@butterflyenthusiastsofnaz.org.