

What is a Native Plant?

Although this is debated, the most commonly accepted definition is a plant that grew here in a similar ecosystem before European settlement. Alien plants come from other places. Those that propagate independently in the wild are called naturalized. Some of these aliens become invasive.

Invasive plants are the “bullies” of the plant world. They push-out, smother or out-compete native plants. They have few predators to keep them in check since they evolved in foreign ecosystems. The four major invasive plants at the Butterfly Trail are Autumn Olive, Crown Vetch, Multiflora Rose and Canada Thistle. Trail volunteers have been working to control these species.

Native plants are a part of the natural community. They have a place in the food chain and in the web of life. They tend not to be invasive since they are held in check by the wildlife that has evolved to use them.

A Butterfly's Basic Needs

- **Host Plants (H)** to lay their eggs on. When these eggs turn to caterpillars, the plants become their food source. Many butterfly host plants are very specific.
- **Nectar Plants (N)** or another adult food source: nectar, sap, manure or rotting fruit for some.
- **Sun** to warm their wings and enable them to fly.
- **Wintering place** unless they can migrate.
- **Shallow water source.**

Trail Etiquette

Please, no wading or swimming in Knauf's pond. It damages the plants. Please do not pick the flowers or remove anything from the Butterfly Trail. Nature is here for the enjoyment of all and also, this is illegal on state game lands.

