



Better with Butterflies!

Blue Heron Park, Eastbluff's neighborhood park, has a Butterfly Garden designed to provide habitat for butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators. Initiated in 2023, the Butterfly Garden is located along a portion of the slope in the park and around the monument sign. Many of the plants within the Butterfly Garden are California natives.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recognizes that at least one third of California's native plants and two-thirds of California's native animals are endemic species; they occur nowhere else in the world. Loss of habitat, water management conflicts, invasive species and climate change threaten their long-term survival. For example, the Western Monarch Butterfly population has declined by more than 95 percent since the 1980s and has a 99 percent probability of extinction by the year 2080.

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2024-12/monarch-butterfly-proposed-endangered-species-act-protection>).



All butterflies are in trouble. A 2025 study published in Science concluded the total amount of butterflies has declined by 22 percent since the year 2000. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director, Martha Williams, has stated that conservation efforts, even in small areas, can promote the recovery of butterflies.

Eastbluff HOA has chosen to help with the butterfly conservation efforts by planting milkweed, the host plant for monarchs, as well as compatible plants that provide nectar. In addition, routine pesticide use has been eliminated in Blue Heron Park.

Eastbluff residents can join in the effort to save butterflies. Simply planting native milkweed and other California native plants in a yard, flower box or parkway makes a difference. Native plants really help because the butterflies evolved to be dependent on these plants; they live better together. Also, native plants improve soil health and enhance ecosystem resiliency.

Consider participating in these conservation efforts by buying narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) or showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) which are native to California. Be forewarned, the caterpillars that will turn into monarch butterflies will eat these plants to the stems, so plant the milkweed behind a flowering plant. Don't pull the leftover dry stems of the milkweed out in the fall, they will resprout in the spring and nourish next year's butterflies.

We invite you to wander through Blue Heron Park and look for the labels identifying the pollinator friendly plants in the Butterfly Garden. Not only are these plants beautiful and beneficial for local fauna, they help with water conservation as they need less water. This website contains a list of the plants in the butterfly garden along with photos. Roger's Gardens carries many native plants and Calscape (the website of the California Native Plant Society found at <https://www.calscape.org/search>) has links to where California native plants can be purchased.

For more information on how to help conserve monarch butterflies, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/monarch>.
(Photos –monarch on jade carpet black sage; skipper on pincushion flower)

Submitted by Eastbluff HOA Park Committee