

Seed Share

at Main Library in Hillsborough



OrangeCountyLibrary.org

Main Library at 137 West Margaret Lane
Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278



Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa

as-KLEE-pee-as too-ber-OH-sah



NC native perennial; 1985
NC Wildflower of the Year



sow in early spring
away from pets
(low severity poison)



blooms in summer &
in the second year



full sun to
part shade



likes sandy or poor, well
drained soil; drought
tolerant, though young
plants need water



monarch & pollinator
favorite; resists deer

Growing Instructions

Start seeds in early spring in or outdoors. Exposure to some cold weather improves germination, which takes about 10 days. Butterfly weed seedlings are best transplanted when young; it's harder to move the seedlings as their taproot develops. Young plants need water their first year, but afterwards butterfly weed is hardy and drought tolerant.

Garden like it's 1776!

A little colonial plant lore for the nation's 250th birth year

Botanical Illustration, 1826 by William Clark

As a genus of plants, *Asclepias* or milkweeds have been long used by Indigenous Peoples for practical, medicinal, and ceremonial reasons. That frequency of use may be what initially attracted the interest by settlers who began studying and sending milkweed specimens back to Europe as early as the 1500's. As a member of the milkweed family, butterfly weed was equally valued for its fibers. However, it has also been prized medicinally, being noted by Thomas Jefferson and others as useful for the treatment of a variety of coughs and lung ailments. Over time, butterfly weed became widely known as "pleurisy root" and was included in the American Pharmacopoeia until 1936.

