

Buddleia-Butterfly Bush

If I had but one plant to put in my garden I would choose the Buddleia. Commonly referred to as the Butterfly Bush it is uncommonly terrific at living up to its name! Every summer it attracts monarchs, skippers, swallowtails, painted ladies and cabbage whites as well as an assortment of flying insects.



Once, I found an added bonus, a mantis variety called a Chinese Mantid, *Tenodera aridifolia*, inhabiting my Butterfly Bush.

Well, of course it was...because it eats butterflies, large caterpillars, bees and wasps and such. It knew where to hang out for food! That's Mother Nature for you.

I observed and photographed this creature for at least a week. Every day I'd search for it's changed location within the Buddleia and watch it move from branch to branch.

Then it was gone. I looked all over and finally discovered it making its way across the lawn to an indigenous Long Island cedar (that my dad gave me from his home on the north shore). I watched the Mantid climb the trunk until I could no longer twist to see it. I guess it was off to lay eggs and settle in for the winter. I really missed him after that and have not found a Mantid in my Butterfly Bush since. Maybe this year....



In addition to being a super attractor to lots of butterflies and other insects, the Buddleia is easy to keep and grow. It tolerates a variety of soil conditions, thrives on major pruning and even self-sows. I frequently find petite butterfly bushlings to transplant or give to friends...and spread the joy!

from the journals of Holly Gordon