

## Attracting butterflies takes a lot of hard work

By Shane Griffis | Ponte Vedra Recorder

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At the Players Community Senior Center, tending to the butterfly garden isn't just a hobby, it's a science.

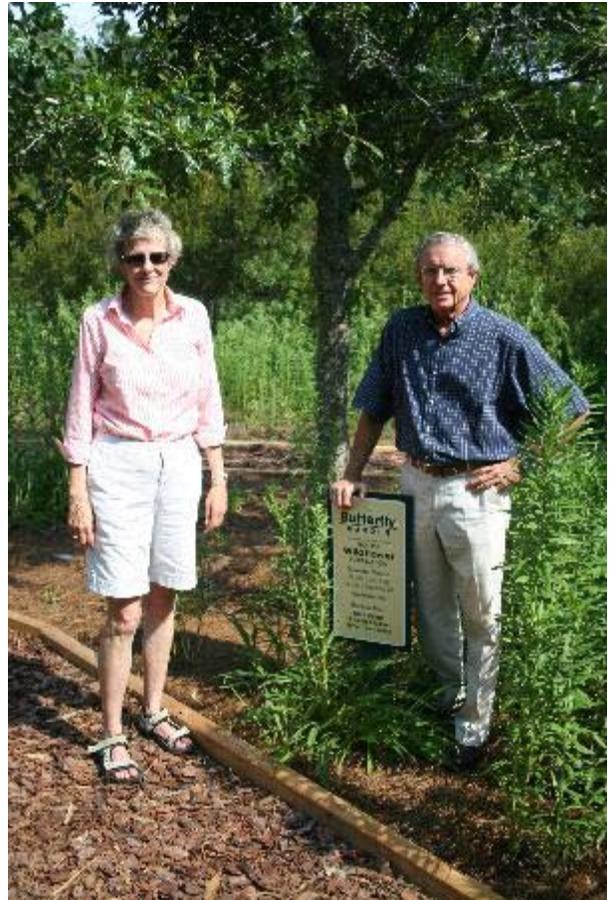
Started in 2007, with a grant from the Florida Wildflower Foundation, the butterfly garden is where people go to spot what is arguably America's favorite insect.

With the exception of a few herbs, all of the plant life in the garden is native to the area.

But attracting butterflies isn't as easy as it might seem. You can't just plant a flower and expect them to come.

The garden has a dedicated staff of volunteer master gardeners who work to maintain the garden and to keep the butterflies coming.

Janet Koehler, who has volunteered in the butterfly garden since its inception said butterflies require two kinds of plants, a nectar plant that the butterflies feed from and a host plant to lay their eggs.



"They're very specific about what kind of host plant they lay their eggs on," said Koehler. "There's just one or two for each species."

Bernie Golczynski, who has also volunteered in the garden since its inception said there's a good reason why butterflies are so picky.

"Caterpillars are so small that when they hatch, they have to be on the food they're going to eat because they can't crawl off the plant," he said.

Golczynski is responsible for determining what kind of plants are needed to keep the butterflies coming.

"I'm the Google expert," he said.

With just nectar plants, the butterflies might come and feed but they won't stay.

"We started off with a basic idea and every year we tweak it," said Golczynski.

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