

Foodplants of a Selection of North East Queensland Butterflies, Moths and Other Insects

North East Queensland has Australia's largest, brightest and most diverse assemblage of butterflies and moths. In the Wet Tropics alone there are well over 60% of all the continent's butterfly species. Below are species of plants which are caterpillar food hosts of the most impressive of moths, butterflies and selected insects of North East Queensland (Cooktown to Mackay and westerly tablelands). Common names are used for all butterflies, whereas the majority of moths are identified by their Latin names. The caterpillars of many species accept the foliage of more than one host plant species as food. Of more than 20,000 Australian species of moths and butterflies there are only about 385 butterfly species.

Plant Form

v vines which need support (trellises, trees, fences, etc.)

t large to medium sized trees

s shrubs or small trees

h herbaceous plant and small plants generally

* Largest and most colourful species of butterflies, moths and other insects.

Host Plant Species	Butterflies and Moths which feed on Host Plants
Acacias (wattles) <i>A. flavescens</i> , <i>A. holosericea</i> , <i>A. melanoxylon</i> and species with composite true leaves (not <i>phyllodes</i>) are best. t	*Several Jewel Butterflies, *Tailed Emperor, Damel's Blue, hundreds of moth species including *Ghost Moths (<i>Aenetus spp.</i>), Eyespot Moths (<i>Donuca spp.</i>), *Large Leaf Moth (<i>Chelepteryx chalepteryx</i>) and * <i>Anthela</i> spp. and Cossid Moths (<i>Xyleutes spp.</i>)
<i>Adenia heterophylla</i> Lacewing Vine v	*Cruiser, *Red Lacewing, Glasswing,
<i>Alectryon spp.</i> Soap Berry t/s	Eastern Flat, Consimilis Blue. Six Line Blue, Glistening Blue, Hairy Line Blue, Pencilled Blue.
<i>Alocasia brisbanensis</i> (syn. <i>A. macroorrhiza</i> in part) Cunjevoi/Native Elephant Ear h	Four species of Hawk Moths and <i>Cruria donowani</i> .
<i>Alphitonia excelsa</i> Red Ash (other <i>Alphitonia</i> s host a subset of listed species) t	*Giant Ghost Moth (<i>Aenetus mirabilis.</i>), Blue Jewel, *Fiery Jewel, *Copper Jewel, *Large Green Banded Blue, Small Green Banded Blue, Indigo Flash, Diggles Blue, *Northern Emperor Moth (<i>Syntherata janetta</i>).
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i> Native Blue Fruited Ginger h	Banded Demon.
<i>Aristolochia tagala</i> Native Dutchman's Pipe v	*Cairns Birdwing, *Red Bodied Swallowtail, *Big Greasy.
<i>Aristolochia thozetii</i> Native Dutchman's Pipe v	*Big Greasy. *Red Bodied Swallowtail.
<i>Austrosteenisia</i> spp. Blood Vines v	*Orange Aeroplane
<i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i> Flame Tree t	Common Aeroplane, *Tailed Emperor, Helenita Blue, Pencilled Blue, several small moths.
<i>Breynia oblongifolia</i> Coffee Bush t/s	Grass Yellow, <i>Parallelia solomonensis</i> and <i>P. latizona</i> and possibly *Australian Rustic.
<i>Callistemon spp.</i> Bottlebrushes t/s	*Ghost Moths (<i>Aenetus spp.</i>), *Emperor Gum Moth and many smaller moths.

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<i>Canthium coprosmoides</i> Coast Canthium s/t	<i>Cephanodes hylas</i> , <i>Cephanodes kingii</i> (Hummingbird Hawk Moths), <i>Gnathothlibus erotus</i> , <i>Macroglossum hirundo</i> (interesting Hawk Moths)
<i>Canthiurn odoratum</i> Sweet Suzy s/t	<i>Cephanodes hylas</i> , <i>C. kingii</i> , <i>Macroglossum</i> spp. including <i>M. hirundo</i> (Hummingbird and Bumblebee Hawk Moths) and possibly <i>Dudgeonea actinias</i> .
<i>Capparis mitchellii</i> , <i>C. lasiantha</i> Bumble Tree t <i>C. canescens</i> and <i>C. arborea</i> equally good v, s	Chalk White, Caper White, Australian Gull, Narrow Winged Pearl White, Common Pearl White.
<i>Carallia brachiata</i> Corky Bark t	*Four o'clock moth (<i>Dysphania fenestrata</i>).
<i>Cassia retusa</i> Climbing Cassia v	Orange Migrant, Yellow Migrant.
<i>Cassia tomentella</i> , <i>C. queenslandica</i> Velvet Bean s/t	Lemon Migrant, Pale Ciliate Blue, Small Grass Yellow, possibly *Tailed Emperor, <i>Thalaina angulosa</i> .
<i>Cayratia</i> spp. Slender Grape v	*Harlequin Moth (<i>Agarista agricola</i>), and at least six species of Hawk Moths.
<i>Celtis paniculata</i> , <i>C. philippensis</i> Silky Celtis Tree, Common Celtis t	*Australian Beak, *Tailed Emperor, Common Aeroplane.
<i>Cissus</i> spp. Native Grape/Watervine v	*Harlequin Moth (<i>Agarista agricola</i>), <i>Cruria donowani</i> and at least six species of Hawk Moths.
<i>Clausena brevistyla</i> Clausena t	*Ambrax, *Capaneus, *Orchardt
Commmersonia bartramia Brown Kurrajong t	*Peacock Jewel.
Connarus conchocarpus Shell Vine v	*Large Green Banded Blue.

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<i>Cryptocarya hypospodia</i> Northern Laurel (<i>C. mackinnoniana</i> and <i>C. triplinerva</i> also good) t	*Macleays Swallowtail, *Blue Triangle, *Common Oakblue, Helenita Blue, rarely Eastern Flat and Purple Moonbeam (on <i>C. mackinnoniana</i>). Glossy Laurel <i>Cryp.laeviagata</i>
<i>Cupaniopsis anarcardiodes</i> Tuckeroo t	*Common Oak Blue, *Fiery Jewel, Pale Ciliate, Blue, Dark Ciliate Blue, Margarita Blue, Six Lineblue, <i>Homodes bracteigutta</i> , Glistening Blue, Common Tit, *Bright Oak Blue.
<i>Cynachum carnosum</i> (<i>syn. Ischnostemma carnosum</i>) v	Black and White Tiger, Lesser Wanderer, *BlueTiger, Common Crow.
<i>Derris heterophylla</i> Climbing Derris v	*Orange Aeroplane, Broad-Banded Awl.
<i>Desmodium heterocarpon</i> Pea Shrub h	Tailed Cupid.
<i>Dipteracanthus austrasicus</i> Northern Blue Bush h	*Blue Argus, Grass Blue, *Common Eggfly.
<i>Dipteracanthus bracteatus</i> (mostly from Cape York) h	*Lurcher, *Common Eggfly.
<i>Discorea transversa</i> Native Yam v	Black and White Flat.
<i>Doryphora aromatica</i> Sassafras t	*Macleays Swallowtail, *Blue Triangle.
<i>Drypetes lasiogyna</i> Yellow Tulipwood t	Common Albatross, Grey Albatross.
<i>Elaeocarpus spp.</i> Quandongs t	*Fiery Jewel, <i>Parallelia constricta</i> , Eastern Flat.
<i>Endospermum medullosum</i> (<i>syn. E. myrmecophilurn</i>) Toywood Tree t	*Zodiac Moth (<i>Alcides zodiaca</i>), *White StripedMoth (<i>Lyssa patroclus</i>), <i>Urapteroides astheniata</i> .
<i>Entada phaseoloides</i> Matchbox Bean v	*Tailed Green Banded Blue.

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<i>Eucalyptus spp.</i> Eucalypts t	Very few butterflies but hundreds of moths, * <i>Melumimas australasiae</i> , *Emperor Gum Moth, *Ghost Moths (<i>Aenetus spp.</i>), * <i>Euproctis spp.</i> , Giant Cossid Moths, Miskins Blue, Cyane Jewel, Miskins Jewel.
<i>Euodia bonwickii</i> Yellow Euodia t	*Ulysses Butterfly, *Northern Emperor Moth (<i>S. janetta</i>).
<i>Evodiella muelleri</i> Little Evodia s/t	*Ulysses Butterfly, *Northern Emperor Moth (<i>S. Melicope rubra</i>).
<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i> Cherry Ballart s/t	*Large Leaf Moth (<i>Chelepteryx chalepteryx</i>), *Fiery Jewel, *Wood White, <i>Euproctis spp.</i> , Lichen Moth (<i>Anisozyga insperata</i>), <i>Acyphas leucomelas</i> , Crow butterflies, <i>Genduara subnotata</i> .
<i>Exocarpos latifolius</i> Native Cherry s	<i>Genduara subnotata</i> , *Fiery Jewel, <i>Acyphas leucomelas</i>
<i>Faradaya splendida</i> October Glory Vine v	*Common Oakblue, Common Tit, Pale Ciliate Blue, Eone Blue.
<i>Ficus spp. esp. F. racemosa, F opposita, F. benjamina</i> Figs <i>F. Congesta</i> t	Foam Moths (<i>Asota spp.</i>), Foam Moth (<i>Neocheradominia</i>), Crow butterflies, Common Moonbeam, <i>Lymantria spp.</i> And <i>Glyphodes spp.</i>
<i>Exocarpos latifolius</i> Native Cherry	<i>Genduara subnotata</i> , *Fiery Jewel, <i>Acyphasleucomelas</i> .
<i>Faradaya splendida</i> October Glory Vine	*Common Oakblue, Common Tit, Pale Ciliate Blue, Eone Blue.
<i>Ficus spp. esp. F. racemosa, F opposita, F. benjamina, Figs F. Congesta</i>	Foam Moths (<i>Asota spp.</i>), Foam Moth (<i>Neocheradominia</i>), Crow butterflies, Common Moonbeam, <i>Lymantria spp.</i> And <i>Glyphodes spp.</i>
<i>Gahnia sieberana, G. aspera</i> Swordgrass Sedge h	Helena Brown, Large Dingy Skipper, Spotted Skipper, Malindeva Skipper.
<i>Geijera salicifolia</i> Scrub Wilga t	*Orchard, *Macleays Swallowtail, *Northern Emperor Moth, <i>Eudesmeola lawsoni</i> .

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<p><i>Glochidion</i> spp. esp. <i>G. sumatranum</i> <i>G. phillicum</i> Buttonwood/Cheese Tree t</p>	<p>*Common Oakblue, *Hercules Moth, *Ghost Moths (<i>Aenetus</i> spp.), *Northern Emperor Moth (<i>S.janetta</i>), Blue Moonbeam, Helenita Blue.</p>
<p><i>Gymnanthera oblonga</i> v</p>	<p>Lichen Moth (<i>Agathia prasinapsis</i>), Crow Butterflies (2 species), Foam Tiger Moth (<i>Rhodogastris rubripes</i>)</p>
<p><i>Hemigraphis</i> spp. h/s</p>	<p>*Australian Lurcher, Brown Soldier, *Common Eggfly and possibly *Blue Banded Eggfly</p>
<p><i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i> Coast Cottonwood s/t</p>	<p>*Common Oak Blue, several colourful bugs such as the brilliant *Harlequin Bug and numerous moth spp.</p>
<p><i>Hollrungia</i> spp. Native Passionfruit v</p>	<p>*Red Lacewing, *Cruiser.</p>
<p><i>Hygrophila salicifolia</i> h</p>	<p>*Blue Argus, Brown Soldier.</p>
<p><i>Imperata</i> spp. esp. <i>I. cylindrica</i> Blady Grass h</p>	<p>Evening Brown, Common Brown, Ringlet, Northern Ringlet, Cedar Bush Brown, Orange Bush Brown, Dingy Dart, White Grass Dart, Greenish Darter, Dingy Ring, Iris Skipper.</p>
<p><i>Litsea leefeana</i> Brown Bollywood (<i>L. australis</i>, <i>L. breviumbellata</i> are good) t</p>	<p>*Purple Brown-eye, *Blue Triangle, Indian Cossid Moth (<i>Zeuzera indica</i>), possibly Eastern Flat and probably Diana Moonbeam.</p>
<p><i>Lomandra longifolia</i>, <i>h. filiformis</i> and <i>L. hystrix</i> Mat Rush h</p>	<p>Symmomus Skipper, Eliena Skipper, White-spot Skipper, Orange White-spot Skipper, Iacchus Skipper, MacQueens Skipper, Maheta Skipper, Philgalia Skipper</p>
<p><i>Lophostemon confertus</i> Brush Box t</p>	<p>*Common Red-eye, *Rare Red-eye, *Fiery Jewel, Eastern Flat and many moth species.</p>
<p><i>Melaleuca</i> spp. esp. <i>M. quinquinerva</i>, <i>M. viridiflora</i> and <i>M. leucadendra</i> t</p>	<p>*Dull Oakblue, *Ghost Moths (<i>Aenetus</i> spp.), *Common Oakblue, Cyane Jewel.</p>

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<i>Melicope elleryana</i> <i>M vitiflora</i> Corkwood, Northern Melicope	*Ulysses Butterfly, *Scott's Ghost Moth (<i>Aenetusscottii</i>), *Northern Emperor Moth (<i>S. janetta</i>) and an*ornate stick insect.
<i>Melodorum</i> spp. (esp. <i>M uhrii</i>) v	*Green Spotted Triangle, *Four Bar Swordtail, *Pale Green Triangle.
<i>Microcitrus</i> spp. Native Limes t/s	*Northern Emperor Moth, Dingy Swallowtail, *Orchard *Ambrax, *Chequered Swallowtail, Bee Hawk Moth, *Capaneus.
<i>Micromelum minutum</i> LimeBerry h/s	*Orchard, *Ambrax, *Capaneus.
<i>Miliusa</i> spp. (esp. <i>M. brahei</i>) s/t	*Five Bar Swordtail, *Green Spotted Triangle.
Mistletoes esp. <i>Ameyma</i> spp. Dendrophthoe spp. (<i>Melicope elleryana</i> , Eucalypts, Callistemons & Melaleucas are excellent Mistletoe hosts h/s)	*Northern Jezabel, *Union Jack, *Common Jezabel, Nysa Jezabel, *Genoveva Azure, Purple Azure, Olane Azure, Dodds Azure, Cooktown Azure, Silky Azure, Amaryllis Azure, *Narcissus Jewel, *Wood White, Diggles Blue, *Mistletoe Emperor Moths (<i>Opodiphthera</i> spp.), various *Oakblues.
<i>Mucuna gigantea</i> Burny Bean v	*Green Awl, Common Aeroplane.
<i>Myrmecodia beccarii</i> Ant Plant h	*Apollo Jewel, Sphinx Hawk Moth (<i>Cizara ardenia</i>).
<i>Neolitsea dealbata</i> Bolly Gum/White Bollywood t	*Blue Triangle, *Purple Brown-eye, Eastern Flat, Common Red-eye.
<i>Omalanthus novo-guineensis</i> Bleeding Heart t	*Hercules Moth.
<i>Omphalea queenslandiae</i> Day Moth Vine v/s	*Zodiac Moth.
<i>Pandanus</i> spp. (<i>P. monticola</i> , <i>P. tectorius</i> , <i>P. solms-laubachii</i>) s/t	*Peppermint Stick Insect, katydids and crickets of various species.
<i>Pararistolochia deltantha</i> and. <i>P. sparusifolia</i> Mountain Dutchman's Pipe and Mt Lewis Dutchman's Pipe v	*Cairns Birdwing, *Red Bodied Swallowtail.

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<i>Parsonia velutina</i> Silkpod Vine v	Common Crow, Cairns Hamadryad, possibly *BlueTiger.
<i>Passiflora aurantia</i> and <i>P. herbertiana</i> Native Passionfruit v	Glasswing, *Cruiser.
<i>Pavetta</i> sp. aff. <i>australiensis</i> Snow Cloud s	Hummingbird and Bumblebee Hawk Moths. *White Nymph, Speckled Lineblue and at least twospecies of Hawk Moths, several *phasmids and the Blue Spotted Weevil.
<i>Planchonia careya</i> Cocky Apple s/t	*Copper Jewel, *Fiery Jewel, *Brown EmperorMoth (<i>O. saccoepoa</i>), Common Tit, * <i>Anthela acuta</i> , Hawk Moth (<i>Theretra</i> <i>oldenlandiae</i>), Cup Moth.
<i>Polyalthia nitidissima</i> Canary Beech t	*Green Spotted Triangle, *Pale Green Triangle, FiveBar Swordtail.
<i>Polyscias elegans</i> Celerywood t	*Hercules Moth, Large Pencilled Blue.
<i>Pongamia pinnata</i> Pongamia t	Common Banded Awl, Dark Ciliate Blue, Black & White Aeroplane, Common Aeroplane.
<i>Pseuderanthemum variabile</i> Pastel Flower or Love Flower h	*Leafwing, Danaid Eggfly, iiBlue Banded Eggfly, *Blue Argus and *Common Eggfly.
<i>Pseudovaria</i> spp. esp. <i>P.froggattii</i> Faeries Baskets s/t	*Five Bar Swordtail, *Four Bar Swordtail, *Green Spotted Triangle, *Pale Green Triangle.
<i>Pycnarrhena novoguineensis</i> v	* <i>Othreis fulliona</i> , * <i>Othreis iridescens</i> , * <i>Phyllodes imperialis</i> , <i>Othreis jordani</i> , * <i>Khadira aurantia</i> (all colourful Fruit Moths).
<i>Rauwenhoffia leichardtii</i> (syn. <i>Melodorum leichardtii</i>) Zig Zag Vine v	*Four Bar Swordtail, *Pale Green Triangle, *Green Spotted Triangle.
<i>Rhysopteris timorensis</i> v	Peacock Awl, Pale Ciliate Blue, *Peacock Jewel.

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<i>Salacia chinensis</i> , <i>S. discipela</i> Lolly Berry (fruits) v	*Australian Plane, Cornelian.
<i>Scolopia braunii</i> Brown Birch s/t	Australian Rustic, Zebra Moth (<i>Cerura multipunctata</i>), Eastern Flat.
<i>Secamone elliptica</i> Corky Milk Vine v	*Blue Tiger, Crow Butterfly.
<i>Senna surratensis</i> Native Singapore Shower t	Orange Migrant, Yellow Migrant, Grass Yellow and possibly Lemon Migrant.
<i>Smilax australis</i> Prickly Smilax v	Miskin's Jewel, Eone Blue, Cephene's Blue.
<i>Stephania japonica</i> (<i>S. japonica</i> var. <i>timorensis</i> best) Pearl Vine v	<i>Eudocima salamina</i> , * <i>Othreis fullonia</i> , * <i>Khadira aurantia</i> (all colourful fruit moths) and a range of other moths.
<i>Tetrasynandra longipes</i> and <i>T. laxiflora</i> Small Tetra Beech s	*Regent Skipper.
<i>Terminalia</i> spp. Damson/Almond t	*Common Oakblue, *Narcissus Jewel, *Copper Jewel, *Emperor Moth (<i>S. janetta</i>), Brown Awl, *Dull Oakblue, <i>Ophiusa coronata</i> .
<i>Timonius timon</i> , <i>T. singularis</i> False Fig s/t	*Hercules Moth, *Emperor Moth (<i>S. janetta</i>). False Figs
<i>Tinospora smilacina</i> (rainforest form is best) Snake Vine v	<i>Othreis materna</i> , <i>Rhytia cocalus</i> , * <i>Othreis fullonia</i> , <i>Othreis jordani</i> , * <i>Khadira aurantia</i> (all colourful Fruit Moths).
<i>Urtica incisa</i> Native Nettle h/s	*Australian Admiral.
<i>Urtica membranacea</i> v	*Pale Green Triangle, *Green Spotted Triangle.