



For the joy of gardening!

Estabrook's

SUMMER FLOWERING BUTTERFLY BUSH CARE

LIGHT

Summer-flowering butterfly bushes need full sun for sturdy growth and abundant flowers. This guide covers identified davidii-type shrubs and summer-flowering hybrids such as Miss Molly, Miss Ruby, and Pugster selections. Give each cultivar room for its mature width and a site with good airflow.

WATER

Water new shrubs deeply when the root ball begins to dry, allowing excess moisture to drain. Established plants tolerate some drought. Avoid automatic daily sprinkling and wet winter soil. Containers need more frequent checks, but the roots must never remain trapped in a filled saucer.

SOIL & PLANTING

Use freely draining soil and keep the root flare near the surface. Avoid low pockets that stay wet through winter, and keep mulch away from the crown. Good drainage is particularly important in Maine. A small container may need protected winter storage even when the shrub is suitable for a garden bed.

FEEDING

Feed conservatively if needed, following soil-test or product-label guidance. Heavy fertilizer does not improve winter survival and can encourage soft, weak growth. If the plant struggles, check drainage, sunlight, and root condition before adding nutrients. Avoid stimulating tender growth late in the season.

SEASONAL CARE

Wait until spring growth or live buds are visible before pruning winter-damaged stems. Flowers form on new growth, but pruning too early can expose the plant to cold injury. Remove dead wood and shape to healthy growth. Avoid hard autumn pruning. Pugster and other compact selections may need only light shaping.

HELPFUL TIPS

Butterfly bush can be slow to wake in spring. Check stems before declaring it dead. Fertile selections can seed beyond the garden, so remove unwanted seedlings and faded heads before seed disperses. Blooming nectar plants do not replace caterpillar host plants. Spring-flowering alternate-leaf butterfly bush requires different pruning and is excluded.