Caterpillars ~~ Food for Baby Birds

Insects—especially caterpillars—are crucially important for raising baby birds. This list ranks local native plants by the number of butterfly and moth species that use them as host plants for their caterpillars and includes those plants most likely to be used in the garden and commercially available. The list was compiled from **www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder** for Eureka, CA (zip code 95501), based on the research of Douglas Tallamy. The (number) is the number of caterpillar species reported for each plant. Note that the number of caterpillar species on the list is _only_ valid for native plant species. Nonnative species in the same genus (Japanese Maple, for instance) typically support 50% fewer species of caterpillars.

Trees and Shrubs

Willow (328 species of caterpillars)
Oak (275)
Bitter Cherry, Choke Cherry (262)
Aspen, Cottonwood, Poplar (230)
Beach Pine (220)
Red Alder, White Alder (202)
Oregon Crabapple (155)
Bigleaf Maple, Vine Maple, Mountain Maple (120)
Ceanothus (120)*
Grand Fir, White Fir (117)
Douglas Fir (116)
Sitka Spruce (114)
Western Hemlock (108)
Black Huckleberry, Red Huckleberry (107)
Rose (99)
Blackberry, Thimbleberry, Salmonberry (96)`
Red-flowering Currant (85?)**
Black Hawthorn (78)
Serviceberry (77)
California Hazelnut (71)
Manzanita (68)
Wild Grape (62)
Red-twig Dogwood (58)
Oregon Ash (57)
Western Red Cedar (49)
Madrone (48)
Douglas Spiraea (44)
Coyote Brush (39)
Oceanspray (37)
Mountain Mahogany (36)
Western Azalea (36)
Snowberry (33)

Flowers and Grasses

Lupine (74 species of caterpillars)
Beach Wormwood, Mugwort (68)
Beach Strawberry, Woodland Strawberry (64)
Sunflower (_Helianthus bolanderi_) (58)
Deer Vetch (_Lotus_) (54)
Canada Goldenrod (53)
Butterweed (_Senecio_) (39)
Willowherb (_Epilobium_) (31)
Penstemons (29)
Milkvetch (29)
Violet (29)
Vetch (28)
Phacelia (25)
Blue Flax (22)
Evening Primrose (21)
Beach Daisy (_Erigeron_) (21)
Yarrow and Sneezeweed (20)
Gum Plant (_Grindelia_) (19)
Cudweed (_Gnaphalium)_ (18)
Cinquefoil (_Potentilla_)(17)
Pearly Everlasting (15)
Hedgenettle (14)
Rock Cress (_Arabis_) (14))
Balsamroot (12)
Clematis (12)
Monkeyflower (12; _not_ Sticky Monkeyflower)
Checkermallow (_Sidalcea_) (11)
Dogbane (11)
CA Fescue, Red Fescue, Idaho Fescue (11)
Wooly Sunflower (11))
Bee Plant (_Scrophularia_) (11)

*Includes Blueblossom, Buckbrush, Deer Brush, Tobacco Brush, Whitethorn.
**Estimate from Calscape.

See also Calscape.org for growing needs of these plants.
Recommended YouTube: "Bringing Nature Home: How you Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants"
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