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 and others (220)
Red Alder, White Alder (202)
Oregon Crabapple (155)
Red-flowering Currant (122)
Bigleaf Maple, Vine Maple, Mountain Maple (120)
Ceanothus (several species) (120)
Grand Fir, White Fir and others (117)
Douglas Fir (116)
Sitka Spruce (114)
Western Hemlock (108)
Black Huckleberry, Red Huckleberry (107)
Wild Rose (99)
Blackberry, Thimbleberry, Salmonberry (96)
Black Hawthorn, Suksdorf's Hawthorn (78)
Serviceberry (several species) (77)
California Hazelnut (71)
Manzanita (several species) (68)
Wild Grape (62)
Red-twig Dogwood and others (58)
Oregon Ash (57)
Western Red Cedar (49)
Madrone (48)
Douglas Spiraea (44)
Coyote Brush (39)
Oceanspray (37)
Mountain Mahogany (two species) (36)
Western Azalea (36)
Snowberry (several species) (33)

Flowers and Grasses

Lupine (several species) (74)
Mugwort and other _Artemisia_ species (68)
Beach Strawberry and others (64)
Sunflower (_Helianthus bolanderi_) (58)
Deer Vetch/Trefoil (_Lotus_) (several sp.) (54)
Goldenrod (two species) (53)
Butterweed (_Senecio_) (39)
Willowherb (_Epilobium_) (several species) (31)
Penstemon (several species) (29)
Milkvetch (several species) (29)
Violet (several species) (29)
Vetch (several species) (28)
Phacelia (several species) (25)
Blue Flax (22)
Wolf's Evening Primrose (21)
Beach Daisy (_Erigeron_) (21)
Yarrow (20)
Gum Plant (_Grindelia_) (several species) (19)
Cudweed (_Gnaphalium)_ (18)
Cinquefoil (_Potentilla_) (two species) (17)
Pearly Everlasting (15)
Hedgenettle (14)
Rock Cress (_Arabis_) (several species) (14)
Hypericum (several species) (14)
Balsamroot (12)
Clematis (12)
Monkeyflower (several species) (12)*
Checkermallow (_Sidalcea_) (two species) (11)
Fescue (several species) (11)
Wooly Sunflower (11)
Bee Plant (_Scrophularia_) (11)

*Sticky Monkeyflower (10?) is a woody shrub.

See also Calscape.org for growing needs of these plants.
Recommended YouTube: "Bringing Nature Home: How you Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants"
Compiled by Donna Wildearth 2019. Updated: 4/25