

Heard it through the Pipevine

March /
April
2004

Newsletter of Austin Butterfly Forum, Inc. • www.austinbutterflies.org

Club Meeting

Monday March 22, 7:00 pm
Zilker Botanical Garden Center

Stephen Taber and **Scott Fleenor** are presenting a program titled, "**Insects of the Texas Lost Pines.**" These two entomologists will be talking about their work in the unique Lost Pines area near Bastrop. They recently coauthored a book by the same title, which will be available for purchase at the meeting.

Also, Native Texas Butterfly Gardens (Coby Dinges) will be selling plants at the meeting for the benefit of the Austin Butterfly Forum.

Zilker Workday on Sat 3/20

Before the next meeting! Join us for our monthly garden workday at Zilker Botanical Gardens. We will be planting along the Blachly Butterfly Trail. 9:00 am to noon, or longer, as

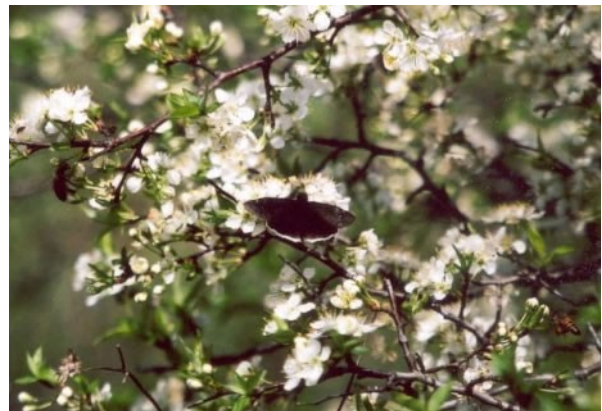
Spring Reminder

Remember, March is the last month for planting. After that plants don't have time to establish themselves before the heat of summer.

Renewal Notice

Please take a moment to check your mailing label to see if your membership is up for renewal. Dues are still only \$20 per household. Remit to the Austin Butterfly Forum and send to ABF c/o Doris Hill, 1605 Broadmoor, Austin, TX 78723.

We have two feature articles this month, one by Coby Dinges and one by Dan Hardy. Coby owns Native Texas Butterfly Gardens, a nursery specializing in butterfly nectar and host plants, located off of Hwy 71 in Bee Cave, 263-1804. Dan is the Director of Programs for the Austin Butterfly Forum. Thank you Coby and Dan!



Funereal Duskywing on Creek Plum (C. Dinges)

Late Winter Blooms

by Coby Dinges

The butterfly season never really ends here in central Texas. Even during the middle of winter butterflies can be seen on warm sunny days. As we get close to spring the butterfly activity definitely starts to pick up.

One of the first wildflowers to show itself is **Four-Nerve Daisy** (*Tetaneuris scaposa*). Usually not considered a great nectar source, this plant is used by both small and medium sized butterflies early on when nothing much else is blooming. The Buckeye butterfly is especially fond of this flower. **Greenthread** (*Thelesperma filifolium*) also blooms earlier than most. It can bloom as early as February but usually kicks into gear by mid



Four-nerve daisy



Greenthread

March. This plant is also a host for the Dainty Sulphur. Another early bloomer is **Verbena** (*Glandularia bipinnatifida*). It can bloom in February but usually starts during March. This plant is favored by most all of the butterflies including the swallowtails. As we get into shrubs and smaller trees,

Agarita (*Berberis trifoliolata*) comes to mind. This evergreen shrub usually starts blooming late February to early March. The yellow blooms are extremely fragrant and are favored by hairstreak butterflies.

One of my personal early favorites are plum trees. In our area **Mexican Plum** (*Prunus mexicana*) and **Creek Plum** (*Prunus rivularis*) are the best choices. Just hang around one of these trees when it's in direct sun and you will notice a flurry of insects. Butterflies include Red Admirals, Painted Ladies, Great Purple Hairstreaks, Funereal Duskywings and several others. Other early blooming small trees include **Texas Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*), **Mexican Buckeye** (*Ungnadia speciosa*), **Texas Almond** (*Prunus minutiflora*), **Spicebush** (*Lindera benzoin*) and **Elbowbush** (*Forestiera pubescens*).

For you folks in the eastern portion of central Texas, there is a vine called **Carolina Jassamine** (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) that starts blooming in February. I've noticed Giant Swallowtails and Pipevine Swallowtails nectaring in late February and on into March on this plant.

Hopefully people will be encouraged to add a few of these plants to their garden or wildscape. For as we all know, there is no such thing as too many blooms in a butterfly garden.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Debbie Russell** and the children of her kindergarten class! Their booth tied for the fourth highest score at the Texas Memorial Museum's Austin Science Fun Day 2004. The Austin Butterfly Forum sponsored the booth, and Mike Quinn and John Kelly (and Debbie, of course) helped coach the children



Henry's Elfin overindulging on Redbud (D. Hardy)

Early Spring Specialties

by Dan Hardy

Spring comes only once a year and with it the Henry's Elfin and Falcate Orangetip, two early spring butterflies. Both are univoltine, that is, they have one life cycle per year. These butterflies have been in chrysalis since last April, hidden under leaves and in brush. They emerge in late February and March and the adults fly and look for mates for about a month. After mating the female searches for the appropriate food plant. The caterpillars feed then pupate. They enter a diapause stage and spend the next 9-10 months as a pupa. So you have to watch closely, for the only adults you'll see this year will be in March and early April.

Henry's Elfin: Watch Redbud Trees and Mexican Buckeye for this brown hairstreak. Look closely for its subtle and beautiful brown shadings, the silvery scales on the outer part of the hindwing and small white marks on the postmedian line. I have seen it lay eggs on Texas Persimmon and Mexican Buckeye and it is reported to use Redbud and Bluebonnet. There may be several species in this group, separated by small color differences and food preferences. It has a short flight period, so if you don't see it by mid-April, you'll have to wait another year for a chance.

Falcate Orangetip: This small white butterfly is almost constantly on the wing. It is slightly smaller than the much more common Checkered White. The male has orange wingtips, which can be seen in flight. The female lacks these. If you are lucky enough to see it nectar, you'll see a dark "marbling" on the hindwing beneath and the distinctive pointed wingtips. If you find a female, follow it to its larval food plant, which is a crucifer, Rock-Cress. This is an inconspicuous plant which I have been able to find only when a Falcate Orangetip led me to one!

Thank you!

February Garden Work Day. Thank you Peg Gavin, Esther Hetzler, John Kelly, Danna Keyburn, Maria Rasmussen, for helping Marvin Lewis with the Zilker butterfly garden.

Austin Area Garden Council. Thank you Dorris Hill, Myrna Kepford, and Marvin Lewis for bringing refreshments to the Austin Area Garden Council meeting.

Announcements

New web site. The Austin Butterfly Forum has a new web site: www.austinbutterflies.org.

Our own Yahoo! group. We have launched a Yahoo! discussion group for Austin-area butterfly enthusiasts. This is an informal forum for chatting about butterfly happenings. ABF will also send reminders and notices to this forum. You may opt to receive only official ABF communications ("special notices") when you subscribe. Please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austinbutterflies>

Upcoming Events

We keep a calendar of upcoming events on the austinbutterflies.org web site. Please visit the web site to learn of changes and new additions – we're always finding great new events to add.

Sat Mar 20 – Garden Workday. Join us for our monthly garden workday at Zilker Botanical Gardens. We will be planting along the Blachly Butterfly Trail. 9:00 am to noon, or longer, as you like.

Mon Mar 22 – Club Meeting. See details in box at front of newsletter.

Sat, Sun Mar 27-28 - Zilker Garden Festival. The [Zilker Garden Festival](#) is a plant sale, a craft festival, and a flower show with over 100 vendors. There will be children's activities, live music, and refreshments. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at [Zilker Botanical Garden](#).

Sat Apr 24 - Wild-Connections Butterfly Festival & Grand Opening Celebration. 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Wild-Connections Butterfly Farm & Nature Center, 10802 Kit Carson Drive, Austin, TX (located 10 minutes west of the Y in Oak Hill) see our website for a map. Celebrate spring at the first annual Wild-

Connections Butterfly Festival and Grand Opening Celebration. Stroll through our new, fully enclosed butterfly flight house featuring 2000 sq. ft. of Texas native butterflies and plants. Learn about Texas native flora and fauna and how you can enjoy it in your own yard. Talk with representatives from Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association, Travis County Master Gardeners, Austin Butterfly Forum, and other local organizations. Enjoy listening to one of our guest speakers, featuring Mr. Malcolm Beck of famed Gardenville. Visit www.wild-connections.com

Sun Apr 25 – Butterfly Walk at Barton Creek Greenbelt. Meet at the west end of the parking lot in front of Barton Springs Pool in Zilker Park (just beyond the Zilker Hillside Theater). Time: 10:00 am -12:00. Leaders: Dan Hardy and Joe Lapp. Bring close-focusing binoculars, hat, sunscreen and insect repellent, and be prepared to walk through brush. Beginners are welcome!

Mon Apr 26 - Club Meeting. Austin Butterfly Forum monthly meeting at [Zilker Botanical Garden Center](#),

Thank you Taylor!

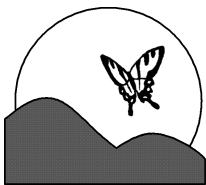
The members of the Austin Butterfly Forum would like to thank **Taylor Maddux** for all his years of generously maintaining the web site, producing the newsletters and handling publicity. Ownership of these items has now passed to Joe Lapp. The board also thanks you for so graciously helping Joe through the

7:00pm. Program by John Abbott, Ph.D., of the University of Texas: "The common dragonflies and damselflies of the Austin area."

Fri Apr 30 - Mon May 3: 4th Annual Texas Songbird Festival. Lago Vista. Explore the Balcones Canyonlands, learning about the birds, wildflowers, and other wildlife of the Texas Hill Country. Of particular interest to butterflyers will be a presentation by famed Texas naturalist Ro Wauer on finding Texas butterflies and a field trip led by Mike Quinn to search for the area's butterflies and wildflowers. For more information, contact John Kelly, 331-8693, or visit, <http://www.lagovista.org/songbirdfestival>

Please submit newsletter events, corrections, and suggestions to the editor, Joe Lapp, at joe@bugfeathers.com. Thank you!

Austin Butterfly Forum, Inc.
7442 Dallas Drive
Austin, TX 78729



Austin Butterfly Forum Membership Form

Become a member or renew your membership.

- Membership Includes:**
- **discounts** on butterfly books, T-Shirts, etc.
 - **plant giveaways**
 - **newsletters** with informative articles
 - **support for the club** and our events

Name:	Daytime phone:
Address:	Evening phone:
City: State: Zip:	Email:

Membership is \$20 annually per household, payable to the Austin Butterfly Forum and sent to:
ABF c/o Doris Hill, 1605 Broadmoor Drive, Austin, TX 78723