

Heard it through the Pipevine



May /
June
2004

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

Club Meeting

Monday May 24, 7:00 pm
Zilker Botanical Garden Center

Bill Calvert is presenting a program titled, "**Monarch Migration: What we know and what we don't know.**" Come ask your questions of the Austin area's Monarch expert.

Zilker Workday on Sat 5/29

Join us for our monthly garden workday at Zilker Botanical Gardens. We will be working along the Blachly Butterfly Trail. 9:00 am to noon.

Annual Butterfly Count

Saturday June 26, 9:00 am

(Rain date is Sunday June 27. Check web site.)
Meet at Zilker Botanical Garden Center

Join our annual butterfly count. Experienced and inexperienced butterflyers are welcome – come learn the excitement of butterflying. We will be compiling data for the North American Butterfly Assoc. For info, contact John Kelly,

Renewal Notice

If we've **highlighted** the expiration date on your mailing label, 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.

The Wild-Connections Butterfly Farm & Nature Center held its grand opening on March 24th. In our feature article, owner and ABF club member Julie Goodin tells us about all the wonderful opportunities the center provides to both children and adults. Joe Lapp also reports on the club's rainy April 24th and 25th butterfly walks that actually had both attendees and butterflies.



The butterfly flight house at Wild-Connections

Wild-Connections Butterfly Farm & Nature Center

by Julie Goodin

The land was originally settled and farmed in the late 1860's by two brothers, who were Confederate soldiers, and their elderly father. Today, the 56 acre farm, a mere shadow of the ranch that it once was, is producing a much different kind of crop...butterflies and smiles!

Wild-Connections Butterfly Farm & Nature Center opened its doors on March 24 to welcome the first of many school children. The focus is the many beautiful winged creatures contained in the fully-enclosed flight house. The rewards are many... smiles, giggles, ahhs and, hopefully, a spark of the kind of respect one gains when encountering nature's wonders.

California Sisters Are Here!

California Sisters haven't been seen in Austin for several years, but they started popping up again late in April. Individuals have been seen at Barton Creek Greenbelt, Hamilton Pool, Westcave Preserve, Balcones Canyonlands Wildlife Refuge, and Enchanted Rock, where Dan Hardy saw at least 10. They tend to fly overhead, so be looking up. Don't miss them!

Purchased in January 2003 by Mark and Julie Goodin, the farm, though overgrazed, seemed to have potential. The Goodins, along with some very good friends, rolled up their sleeves and set to work to create a place that is inviting and interesting to both children and adults. Choosing the butterfly as their ambassador to the great outdoors, the Goodins wanted to entice families to spend more time together outdoors, poking around and exploring. The hope is that the exposure to nature will help kids and their parents develop empathy and a deep respect for life.

Upon visiting *Wild-Connections*, the Goodins highly recommend that you leave your watch in the car. The farm and nature center, which is open to the public as well as tour groups, is a place to relax and meander. Picnicking and hiking are the activities of choice along with a leisurely stroll through the butterfly house. Heck, you can even bring your kite and take advantage of the large open spaces!

The 2,000 sq. ft. butterfly house is home to many varieties of Texas natives...both flora and fauna. Along with the butterflies...monarchs, zebras, buckeyes, question marks, and many more...reside tadpoles, frogs, fish, turtles, and a small snake (or two). The vegetation serves as both nectar plants and host plants to a wide variety of native butterflies, creating a complete eco-system. Visitors are encouraged to spend as much time as they like in the house.



Julie Goodin, a former educator, has developed an educational tour for young children. These tours include a presentation of the parts of a butterfly that include a crazy costume donned by Goodin in hopes of capturing the children's attention and interest. The

presentation is followed by a tour of the butterfly house. With a small piece of fruit in hand, each young visitor has an opportunity to hand-feed the butterflies. Along with the tours, other children's programs at *Wild-Connections* include a gardening class for homeschooled children and a summer day camp for kids ages 7-12.

Adults are also welcome, and encouraged, to enjoy the many gardens, butterflies, and historical features at the farm... but remember to leave your watch in the car!

For more information about the farm and activities, see the website at www.wild-connections.com or call 301-5553.

(We would like to express their appreciation to the Austin Butterfly Forum for being a part of the Grand Opening Celebration at Wild-Connections and to Dan Hardy for so graciously giving of his time to present a slide show to our guests. ~the Goodins)



Goatweed leafwing larva on croton (J. Lapp)

Our April Butterfly Walks

by Joe Lapp

A wonderful article about Wild-Connections appeared in the Austin Statesman, and a side box of the article mentioned that the ABF was holding a butterfly walk at Barton Creek Greenbelt on Saturday April 24th. Such publicity is absolutely fantastic except for one little problem – the walk was scheduled for Sunday the 25th – not the Saturday – because neither of the two walk leaders, Dan Hardy and Joe Lapp, could make it on Saturday. Dan and Joe fell into panic trying to figure out what to do.

Then Barbara Ribble summons Chris Durden to the rescue. Chris is Curator Emeritus of Entomology at the Texas Memorial Museum and is arguably the most knowledgeable butterfly expert in the Austin area. Chris readily accepted Barbara's summons to lead an additional butterfly walk on Saturday.

Saturday comes and it is overcast and drizzling. Barbara, Chris and Robert Corbin arrive to butterfly in the rain. As they're trying to decide whether to do the walk, the sun suddenly comes out. So off they go.

They had a wonderful time. They found butterflies, caterpillars and some great plants. Two falcate orangetip larvae were feeding on rock cress, and one giant swallowtail larva was feeding on wafer ash. Barbara brought the giant swallowtail larva home and raised it, and it's now in the pupal stage. In all they had 17 species of adult butterflies, including a viceroy and a great purple hairstreak.

Sunday comes, and it's Dan's and Joe's turn. It's drizzling and overcast again. Barbara and Robert show up for Sunday too. Despite the rain, Theresa Bayoud and Lauren Bauer also show, not willing to let the rain stop them from going into the field, butterflies or not. So we do the magic chatting for a while to make the sun come out.

Only the sun does not come out for us on Sunday. We decided to go anyway, and we're glad we did.

We did see butterflies, six species of adults to be exact. A few were flying, but most of them we saw because we scared them up, trouncing through the brush. Robert and Dan educated us on the various wildflowers and host plants we saw, so we kept quite occupied. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the rock cress they saw the day before. But we did find a goatweed leafwing caterpillar rolled in a croton leaf. The photo shows this caterpillar with leaf unrolled.

Despite the rain, both days were fabulous. We thank everybody who came out for contributing to two wonderful mornings, and we especially thank Chris Durden for generously leading the Saturday trip.

Announcements

Cowpen Daisy Now Ready

A number of people have been asking Coby Dinges for Cowpen Daisy. Coby reports that his Cowpen Daisy is now ready for purchase.

Cowpen daisy is the host plant of the Bordered Patch. It is an annual that normally blooms in the fall, but is blooming now, and can grow to 4' tall.

Our own Yahoo! group. Our discussion forum is quite lively, with much talk about raising caterpillars. Please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austinbutterflies>

Thank you!

Thanks to all those who helped staff the Butterfly Flight Cage during the Zilker Garden Fest, March 27 & 28. More than 1600 visitors came by! We couldn't have managed without the help of all these folks: **Dale & Pat Bulla, Dan Hardy, Doris Hill, John Kelly, Myrna Kepford, Joe Lapp, Jeryl Leifeste, Julia Marsden, Dorothy Pocaïque, Mary Helen Quinn, Debbie Russell, Lois Schubert, & Charleen Searight.**

Thanks also to **John Ingram**, who donated three spectacular butterfly prints for a silent auction in support of Zilker Botanical Garden. And thanks to **Lois Schubert** who had the prints framed.

More thanks to **Doris Hill, John Kelly, Marvin Lewis, & Debbie Russell** for sprucing up the Blatchly Butterfly Garden for the festival. And

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.

Mon May 24 – Club Meeting. See details in box at front of newsletter.

Sat May 29 – Garden Workday. Join us for our monthly garden workday at Zilker Botanical Gardens. We will be working along the Blatchly Butterfly Trail. 9:00 am to noon, or longer, as you like.

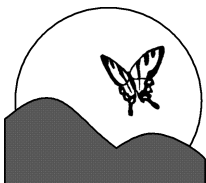
Sun Jun 6 – Butterfly Walk at Barton Creek Greenbelt. Meet at the west end of the parking lot in front of Barton Springs Pool in Zilker Park (just beyond the Zilker Hillside Theater). Time: 10:00 am -12:00. Leaders: Dan Hardy and Joe Lapp. Bring close-focusing binoculars, hat, sunscreen and insect repellent, and be prepared to walk through brush. Beginners are welcome! (Bring \$3 park entrance fee)

Sat Jun 26 – “4th of July” Butterfly Count. (Rain date Jun 27.) See details in box at front of newsletter.

Mon Jun 28 - Club Meeting. Austin Butterfly Forum monthly meeting at [Zilker Botanical Garden Center](#), 7:00pm. Program by Ro Wauer, former park naturalist at Big Bend National Park: “Finding Texas Butterflies.”

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

Austin Butterfly Forum, Inc.
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Austin Butterfly Forum Membership Form

Become a member or renew your membership.

Your membership helps support our club activities, but members also receive bimonthly **newsletters** with upcoming events and informative articles, **butterfly plants** that we often give away, and **discounts** on books, T-shirts and more.

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