



Heard it through the Pipevine



Sept. /
Oct.
2004

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

Club Meeting

Monday Sep 27, 7:00 pm
Zilker Botanical Garden Center

Mike Quinn is presenting a program titled, "**Southern Tamaulipas, Mexico: Bugs, Birds, Botany and Beyond.**" Photo essay of field trips to southern Tamaulipas in the company of entomologists, herpetologists, ornithologists, and mammalogists from Texas A&M, UT and the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas. Slide show provides a glimpse of how these biologists conduct their research and what they found.

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 10/2

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.

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.

Thank you!

*Dan Hardy and John Kelly have written quite a bit for this newsletter. Dan reports on what's been flying around Austin, including Coby Dinges's amazing *Polydamas* find. He also reports on our 4th of July Butterfly Count. John provides us with a checklist for the Zilker Botanical Gardens and gives us some suggestions on planting trees and bushes this Fall. Take special note that we need people to fill several board positions that are becoming vacant.*



Butterflies watching the Witch (J. Lapp)

4th of July Butterfly Count

by Dan Hardy

The Forum's annual count took place on June 27, 2004. Ten of us dodged rainstorms on June and found 35 species of butterflies and 140 individuals. We ended the day soaking wet when a rainstorm caught us at St. Edward's Park. Undoubtedly the count would have higher except for the cloudy weather and rain. Typical counts have been in the 40s on past years.

The count was postponed a day due to the ominous weather Saturday morning. The next day was not much better. After meeting at Zilker Butterfly garden at 9:00 am, we wondered down the path to the garden and were delighted to find a large Black Witch moth feeding in the bird feeder. Marvin Lewis had put out a mixture of Dr Pepper and molasses the night before. It paid off, because there was a second Black Witch at the next feeder. This has been a banner year in Texas for Black Witches. Unfortunately, we could not find the Spicebush Swallowtails that have been breeding in the garden all summer.

Next stop was the Barton Creek Greenbelt entrance at Barton Springs. A Brazilian Skipper was spotted. Dark clouds loomed and some of us scurried back to the cars. Barbara Ribble and Joe Lapp took a detour and found the only Vesta Crescents of the day.

After lunch at Schlotzsky's, we went to Mayfield Park, where we hit rare patch of sunny. The park produced a Marine Blue. Mt. Bonnell, the next stop, didn't have much. We went on the St. Edward's Park, on Bull Creek Rd. This is one of the best urban parks for butterflies, although sunny weather is required. We didn't get that, and a rainstorm put an end to the day.

Participants: Dan Hardy, Lauren Bauer, Jeff Taylor, Dawn Dickson, Theresa Bayoud, Shelia Hargis, Joe Lapp, Marvin Lewis, Roxie Rochat, and Barbara Ribble.

Count data (the number in parentheses is the count for the species):

Pipevine Swallowtail (9)
 Black Swallowtail (6)
 Giant Swallowtail (6)
 Two-tailed Swallowtail (1)
 Little Yellow (4)
 Sleepy Orange (5)
 Juniper Hairstreak (3)
 Dusky-blue Groundstreak (1)
 Gray Hairstreak (4)
 Marine Blue (1)
 Reakirt's Blue (1)
 Gulf Fritillary (2)
 Zebra Heliconian (5)
 Variegated Fritillary (2)
 Bordered Patch (10)
 Texan Crescent (6)
 Vesta Crescent (4)
 Pearl Crescent (4)
 Common Buckeye (1)
 Tawny Emperor (1)
 Leafwing species (1)
 Silver-spotted Skipper (2)
 Horace's Duskywing (1)
 Funereal Duskywing (3)
 Common/White Checkered-skipper (4)
 Desert Checkered-skipper (2)

Clouded Skipper (10)
 Southern Skipperling (5)
 Fiery Skipper (3)
 Sachem (1)
 Dun Skipper (5)
 Celia's Roadside-skipper (9)
 Eufala Skipper (4)
 Brazilian Skipper (1)
 Ocola Skipper (1)

Black Swallowtail caterpillars (2)
 Gulf Fritillary caterpillar (1)

Butterflies of the Zilker Botanical Gardens

by John Kelly

On your strolls through the Zilker Botanical Gardens, you've surely noticed the butterflies sipping at the Gardens' flowers. But have you ever wondered what all those butterflies might be?

Learning the names of our butterflies can be enjoyable--and a challenge. That's because the Gardens, like all of Central Texas, support an abundance of these beauties. Almost 180 kinds of butterflies occur in the Austin area, about a fourth of the 726 species known from North America. A major reason for this diversity is our location: Central Texas hosts species from both eastern and western North America. And our part of Texas is also a great place to search for visitors from south Texas and the tropics.

As part of a survey of Travis County's wildlife, the Austin Butterfly Forum has begun collecting observations of butterflies found in the Zilker Botanical Gardens. To date we've recorded 69 species--that's more than a third of the butterflies known from Central Texas. And we expect to find more. We're always interested in learning about new species in the garden. If you have new species to report, please contact John Kelly at 331-8693.

Here's the current list:

Pipevine Swallowtail
 Black Swallowtail
 Giant Swallowtail
 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
 Two-tailed Swallowtail
 Spicebush Swallowtail
 Southern Dogface
 Cloudless Sulphur
 Orange-barred Sulphur
 Large Orange Sulphur
 Tailed Orange

Lyside Sulphur
 Little Yellow
 Sleepy Orange
 Dainty Sulphur
 Great Purple Hairstreak
 Oak Hairstreak
 Henry's Elfin
 Juniper Hairstreak
 Gray Hairstreak
 Lacey's Scrub-Hairstreak
 Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak
 Dusky-blue Groundstreak
 Ceraunus Blue
 Reakirt's Blue
 American Snout
 Gulf Fritillary
 Julia
 Zebra Longwing
 Variegated Fritillary
 Bordered Patch
 Texan Crescent
 Pearl Crescent
 Question Mark
 American Lady
 Painted Lady
 Red Admiral
 Common Buckeye
 Red-spotted Purple
 Common Mestra
 Tropical Leafwing
 Goatweed Leafwing
 Hackberry Emperor
 Tawny Emperor
 Monarch
 Queen
 Soldier
 Silver-spotted Skipper
 Long-tailed Skipper
 Coyote Cloudywing
 scalopwing sp. (*Staphylus* sp.)
 Texas Powdered-Skipper
 Sickie-winged Skipper
 Horace's Duskywing
 Common/White Checkered-Skipper
 Tropical Checkered-Skipper
 Desert Checkered-Skipper
 Julia's Skipper
 Clouded Skipper
 Orange Skipperling
 Southern Skipperling
 Fiery Skipper
 Southern Broken-Dash
 Sachem
 Dun Skipper
 Celia's Roadside-Skipper
 Eufala Skipper
 Ocola Skipper
 Brazilian Skipper



Polydamas Swallowtail caterpillar (D. Hardy)

Polydamas Swallowtails in Austin

by Dan Hardy

In early September Coby Dinges saw a strange butterfly fluttering around the pipevine in his backyard in south Austin. When he looked closer it turned out to be a Polydamas Swallowtail, and it was laying eggs on the pipevine! The butterfly was only slightly worn. He returned about a week later and noticed about 10 distinctive caterpillars on the plant. He contacted me and I went over and photographed the caterpillars.

I had always wondered how Polydamas differed from Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars. Most of us have seen or reared Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars. Pipevines caterpillars have dark black-and-purple bodies. In comparison, notice the black tiger striping all over the body of the Polydamas. They have odd tentacles in front of the anal proleg that they tap on the branch when they move, like a blind man tapping the ground. They are sharp!



Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillar (M. Lewis)

We found 10 caterpillars, both early and late instars, and 20 eggs. When we went back four days later, there were only two caterpillars. The shoot with the first batch of eggs had been eaten, but we looked and found about 20 more eggs that had been laid on the mulberry that the pipevine was using as a support to wrap around.

Finding eggs and two stages of caterpillars implies that the female must have visited the vine at least 2-3 times. Possibly the same female keeps making rounds, or there could be more than one female.

The vine is an unknown species. Coby bought it from a nursery in north Austin, and it was sold as "*Aristolochia tomentosa*." But it doesn't seem to be *tomentosa*. It has large blooms and produces lots of seed pods. It's been growing for many years in Coby's butterfly garden.

I know there have been a handful of records of *Polydamas* Swallowtails from Austin, but I'd assumed they were vagrants. *Polydamas* are regular but rare in

Program Suggestions Needed for 2005

We are starting to plan the programs for next year's meetings. Please help us come up with program ideas. We need topics and speakers. Please provide us with contact information.

Thank you!

the Rio Grande Valley and turn up occasionally further

Texas Butterfly Festival
Thu Oct 14 – Sun Oct 17
www.texasbutterfly.com

NABA Biennial Meeting
Thu Oct 21 – Sun Oct 24
www.naba.org/meeting.html

north. I've never heard of them breeding here. Pipevine and *Polydamas* Swallowtails use toxic pipevines (Dutchman's Pipe or *Aristolochia*) as caterpillar foodplants.

Kudos to Coby on this great find. Everyone should keep their pipevines ready!

(Visit <http://community.webshots.com/user/dhh787> for more of Dan's photos of these gorgeous caterpillars. You will need to navigate to the page that has the gallery titled, "*Polydamas* Swallowtail." ~Ed.)



Laviana White Skipper (J. Lapp)

What's Flying

by Dan Hardy

Here are some highlights from around Austin.

During the past three weeks there has been an explosive emergence of Eastern Tailed-Blues. I've seen them at almost every site I've visited. Sally Breed reported over 30 at St. Edward's Park. Their host plant is weedy-looking legumes. Watch for small, slow-flying blues.

Many Large Orange Sulphurs are intermixed with the Cloudless Sulphurs that are flying around. They can be seen at the Zilker Botanical Garden around the tree-sized Sennas. Look for the caterpillars in the Sennas.

While you're at the Botanical Garden, search through the Spicebush plants in the butterfly garden for Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillars. There have been multiple broods this year. It's the best year ever for these swallowtails in the garden. You often see the adults wandering around the plants, too. Also at the Botanical Garden, Sickie-winged Skippers have been using blooming Kidneywood.

A few California Sisters have been seen at Hamilton Pool and in the Barton Creek Greenbelt. Least Skippers have been regulars in the marshy edges of Bull Creek at St. Edward's Park. Finally, Harvesters were found at Hornsby Bend during the summer on the Platt Lane trail and along the Colorado River edge, so you should keep a lookout for these unusual hairstreaks, whose caterpillars eat aphids.

(As we go to press, another unusual butterfly has started popping up: the large Laviana White Skipper. Joe Lapp found one at Hamilton Pool, and Dan Hardy just found one in the Barton Creek Greenbelt. ~ Ed.)

Fall Planting Reminder

by John Kelly

The time for planting trees and shrubs has come again. You'll want to have those plants in the ground before the end of November: that allows them time to get established before winter sets in.

And when you're planting, why not keep wildlife in mind? The Austin area already has an overabundance of things like crape myrtle and Arizona ash, plants of only minimal value for butterflies or birds.

Consider instead such early-blooming plants as Texas almond, Mexican plum, creek plum, or agarita. They're important providers of nectar in late winter and early spring. Shrubs such as kidneywood or our native lantana--plants which provide nectar through much of the growing season--are also excellent choices. And don't forget the caterpillar host plants, plants such as wafer-ash, prickly-ash, or Texas milkweed.

Check with any of our sponsoring nurseries for suggestions on what's good for the butterflies. The Native Texas Butterfly Gardens will also have plants available for purchase at the September meeting.

Board Positions Opening

Four board positions will be opening next year. Be thinking about which positions interest you. We need a few people to step forward and keep the club going or even to take the club to the next level. The opening positions follow:

President

Secretary

V.P. Publicity

V.P. Membership

Joe Lapp plans to remain the club media guru, taking care of the newsletter, the web site, and the brochures, but someone is needed to put some energy specifically into promoting the club and increasing membership.

Sign up for the November Member Show and Tell

The November program is a member show-and-tell. We invite members to give talks and slide shows or to bring whatever they'd like to share. Presentations will be limited to 10 or 15 minutes. Please let Dan Hardy know what you're bringing or talking about. His phone # is 328-8750 and email is ddh787@yahoo.com.

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 Sep 27 -- Club Meeting. See details in box at front of newsletter.

Sat Oct 2 -- Garden Workday. 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, or longer, as you like.

Sat Oct 2 to Sun Oct 3 -- Wildlife EXPO. Volunteer to welcome visitors to the butterfly flight house.

Thu Oct 14 to Sun Oct 17 -- Texas Butterfly Festival. Spend a few days in the Rio Grande Valley looking for butterflies with experts. Attend seminars too. For details visit www.texasbutterfly.com.

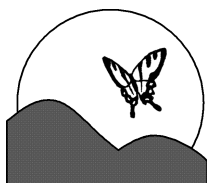
Thu Oct 21 to Sun Oct 24 -- NABA Biennial Meeting. NABA is also holding a weekend of butterflying in the valley. www.naba.org/meeting.html

Sat Oct 23 -- Youth Birding Camp. Joe Lapp is hosting a butterfly and spider walk at Hornsby Bend for kids ages 8-12. youthbirdingcamp@balinsky.com

Mon Oct 25 - Club Meeting. Austin Butterfly Forum monthly meeting at [Zilker Botanical Garden Center](#), 7:00pm. Program by Phil Schappert, Ph.D., of UT.: "Passion Vines and Butterflies"

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

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