

DCLS NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DALLAS COUNTY LEPIDOPTERISTS' SOCIETY

NUMBER 58

JANUARY, 2005

DALLAS COUNTY
LEPIDOPTERISTS'
SOCIETY

Purpose:

To provide a forum where people may gather who share an interest in butterflies and moths, whether that interest takes the form of collecting, gardening, photography, study or casual observation.

Admission is free.



Next DCLS Meeting, January 15th

The next meeting of the DCLS will be this coming Saturday, January 15th, at 10:00 a.m. We will meet at the Dallas Museum of Natural History at Fair Park, in the upstairs auditorium. The topic of the meeting will be a presentation entitled: "*Strays, Migrants, and Residents*," pointing out the differences between our resident populations of butterflies, the ones that simply stray into our area, and those that pass through on their way elsewhere.

As always, members are encouraged to bring any photos, specimens, or other interesting items to share with the

rest of the group.

The calendar for meetings is set for the rest of the year (see page four) but there are a few



Large Orange Sulphur, a regular stray into our area.

field trip dates where locations need to be finalized. We'll discuss some of the possibilities on Saturday. Also, please be sure to print

out and save the calendar for future reference throughout the year. While the dates are set, as we all know, weather in north Texas can be unpredictable so always be sure to check the website on the morning of a field trip if there is any question about the weather. There will be an update there should there be any change in the meeting times or in case of a cancellation. Email reminders are sent out the week of the meetings.

See you all on Saturday!

DCLS Turns Ten This Year!

Hard to believe that so much time has passed since our first meeting, but this May will mark the ten year anniversary of the Dallas County Lepidopterists' Society. We've certainly grown a great deal from the four or five people

who attended that first meeting—and with the increased interest in butterflies that growth shows no sign of lessening.

To celebrate this milestone several special outings will be made this year, including a

'blacklighting for moths' field trip, probably sometime in June.

Thanks for making the first 10 years so much fun. Now, let's get started on the next decade!

The Butterfly Garden

by Tina Dombrowski,
Director of Horticulture, Texas Discovery Gardens

Swan Flower Milkweed for Monarchs



The delicate flowers and unusual seed pods of Swan Flower.



Ever on the lookout for new and interesting host plants for the butterfly garden, Swan Plant Milkweed (*Asclepias fruticosa*) deserves consideration. One of approximately 200 species in the Asclepiadaceae family, Swan Plant Milkweed (a common name based on the flowers) or Tennis Ball Bush (a common name based on the fruit) is an attractive, easy to grow annual from Africa. Like many of the milkweeds, it has a moderate rate of growth and flowers easily in full sun to partial shade, from summer through fall. Creamy white flowers in drooping clusters are followed later in the season by light green, three inch long spiny balloon shaped fruit. In the botanical jargon of 'Hortus Third', these follicles are 'softly filiform-spinescent'. This is one milkweed that attracts attention and comment when in fruit. The plants reach four to six feet in height during the growing season, with long narrow light green leaves. It is reminiscent of a shrub willow and moves as gracefully.

This is an easy plant to propagate from seed. Seed should be collected when the fruit splits easily, revealing an inner chamber of tasseled seed, just waiting for a good stiff wind to send them airborne. Each plant produces an abundance of seed. Seed can be cleaned (i.e. tassels removed) and sown directly in the ground during April. Cover the seed with loose soil and keep it moist until germination, usually within 21 days. Seed can also be sown in flats or pots inside and seedlings set out in April-May. The usual array of milkweed pests can be bothersome, however Swan Plant seems to fare better than most, incurring only mild attacks from Aphids and Milkweed Beetles.

Swan Flower Milkweed is a host plant for Monarchs and Queen butterflies, compatible with Mexican Milkweed and Showy Milkweed in growing requirements. Seed of Swan Flower Milkweed will be available at the February, 2005 Seed Exchange meeting of the DCLS. Check the DCLS website for more information. The Texas Discovery Gardens Butterfly Plant Sale on Saturday, June 4, 2005 will offer mature plants for sale.

New On The Website: Butterfly Gardening Section



Gulf Fritillary on New Gold Lantana—an excellent nectar plant.

A new section will be added to the DCLS website this week devoted to butterfly gardening.

Basic concepts of butterfly gardening will be covered, with

extensive lists of host and nectar plants that will do well for the north Texas area. Photos of the plants will be added as well, as they become available. Plant lists will be presented in various ways, by botanical name, by common name and by what works well to attract different species of butterflies and moths.

This will definitely be a “work in progress,” changing and growing with each month.

There will also be an area where DCLS members can send in photos of their own butterfly gardens with notes and observations on what worked well for them -- and what didn't.

To view the new section, go to www.dallasbutterflies.com and click on “Butterfly Gardening” on the navigation bar.

“The furthest north it has previously been reported is Kerr County in the Texas Hill Country.

Lassaux’s Sphinx Taken in North Texas

A worn specimen of Lassaux’s Sphinx (*Erinnyis lassauxii*) was taken in November in southern Dallas County at a Mercury vapor light.

This particular species of sphinx moth’s normal range is northern Argentina through Central America and Mexico and south Texas. The furthest north it has

been previously reported is Kerr Co. in the Texas Hill Country.

Host plants for this species belong to members of the Spurge family (*Euphorbiaceae*) as well as the milkweed family *Asclepiadaceae*). Even though there are many representative plants of these families in our area this species would most likely not



Lassaux’s Sphinx

be able to ever breed here due to the cold north Texas winters.

Dallas County Lepidopterists’ Society and Yahoo

Dallas County Lepidopterists’ Society members now have a new way to communicate to one another through Yahoo Groups.

Ty Phillips came up with the idea and is the group moderator. Members join Yahoo Group, which only takes a few minutes and is free, and then they can

post messages which will then be emailed to all other members. In this way DCLS members can tell one another of any interesting butterflies they are seeing, ask questions, share comments and knowledge with one another, or schedule their own butterfly outings. It can be a fantastic tool for members to

use in order to expand and share their knowledge.

To join the DCLS Yahoo Group go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dallasbutterflies/>



Red Spotted Purple

Fort Worth Botanic Gardens Live

Butterfly Exhibit, March 2005

The Fort Worth Botanic Gardens will fill their 10,000+ square foot conservatory with tropical butterflies during the month of March, 2005. Two-thousand pupae will be received each week from butterfly farms in Malaysia, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Florida and placed in emergence boxes for the public to watch as the butterflies emerge and are released into the exhibit.

Among the many species of tropical butterflies that will populate the exhibit will be, for the first time in north Texas, the Common Birdwing (*Troides helena*).



Common Birdwing

This is the third live butterfly exhibit that the gardens have held, the first being in 2000 and then again in 2002. Volunteers are needed to help with the exhibit, both inside and outside the conservatory. If you are interested, contact: Barbara Opdenhoff at 817-871-7966 or email at: Barbara.Opdenhoff@fortworthgov.org

The Fort Worth Botanic Gardens are located at 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd, (off of University and I-30), Fort Worth Texas. Admission into the exhibit will be: \$5 for adults and children 13 and over; \$4 for seniors (55+); \$3 for children 3-12; \$2.50 each for school children in groups of 20 or more; and free for children 2 and under.

Scarborough Faire's House of Butterflies

The House of Butterflies will be open during the Scarborough Faire Renaissance Festival in Waxahachie on weekends from April 9th through May 30th. House of Butterflies flies native butterflies from Texas in their open air exhibit, including Pipevine Swallowtails, Giant Swallowtails, Monarchs, Queens, Cloudless Sulphurs, Julias, Zebra Longwings, Malachites, Buckeyes, and many more. Along with the many species of butterflies there are also ample supplies of caterpillars feeding on the provided host plants.



Julia (*Dryas iulia*)

Volunteers will receive free admission as well as a free pass to the Festival and a t-shirt. If you would like to volunteer to work at the exhibit, please contact Virginia Sevier at 972-333-1653.

DCLS Calendar for 2005

Here are the dates for the "official" meetings and field trips for the year. It is very likely that there will be some other outings — such as a blacklighting for moths field trip. These and other important butterfly related dates will be found on the DCLS website Calendar of Events.

January 15, 2005 - Dallas Museum of Natural History, 10:00 a.m. Topic: "*Strays, Migrants and Residents*"

February 12, 2005 - Dallas Museum of Natural History, 10:00 a.m. Topic: "*Caterpillars - How They Live and How To Find Them*" and our annual Seed Exchange.

March 12, 2005 - Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, 10:00 a.m. to tour "Butterflies in The Garden".

April 9, 2005 - LBJ Grasslands, Wise County, TX @ 1:00 p.m. (**Note later time**).

May 14, 2005 - Field trip to be announced.

June 11, 2005 - Field trip to be announced.

July 9, 2005 - Field trip to be announced.

August 13, 2005 - 10:00 a.m. Field trip to Dale Clark's butterfly ranch, "Butterflies Unlimited" in Glenn Heights, TX.

September 10, 2005 - Field trip to be announced.

October 8, 2005 - Field trip to be announced.

November 12, 2005 - Dallas Museum of Natural History, 10:00 a.m. Topic: Dr. Dave Schleser will lecture on his trips to the Amazon, specifically the insects and butterflies he encounters there.

December 10, 2005 - Dallas Museum of Natural History, 10:00 a.m. Topic: To be announced.