
◊ DCLS News ◊

Number 54

February, 2004

DCLS Meeting Saturday, 2/14/04

The next meeting of the Dallas County Lepidopterists' Society will be this coming Saturday, February 14th. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the upstairs auditorium of the Dallas Museum of Natural History at Fair Park. This will be a two-topic meeting, starting off with a presentation on "How to Make and Maintain a Butterfly Collection" before moving on to our annual seed exchange.

The presentation on "How to Make and Maintain a Butterfly Collection" will explain the importance and need for collecting, the proper curating of a collection and a demonstration on spreading butterflies on a spreading board. There will also be a brief presentation on aberrant specimens, individual butterflies that for some reason, either from environmental or genetic factors, are not normal in appearance.

The seed exchange offers a chance for us to share our favorite performing butterfly nectar and host plants with other members. Don't worry if you don't have seeds to share...come anyway! There's always plenty to go around.

See you Saturday.

The Dallas County Lepidopterists' Society



Est. 1995

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.

Mark Your Calendars for 2004 Meetings

While I had hoped to have all the details for the 2004 meetings hammered out by this newsletter, it just hasn't happened. However, the dates at least have been set, if not the locations, so mark your calendars!

March 20th - TBA

April 10th - TBA

May 1st - LBJ Grasslands, north of Decatur, Wise County.

June 12th - Butterflies Unlimited, Glenn Heights, TX.

July 10th - TBA

August 14th - TBA

September 11th - TBA

October 9th - TBA

November 13th - Dallas Museum of Natural History. Topic: TBA

December 11th - Dallas Museum of Natural History. Topic: TBA

We will also have a moth blacklight outing sometime this year as well. The calendar will be complete within the next week or so, so check the website for updates.

Surviving the Winter: Different Strategies for Different Species

Ask the average person on the street and they'll think all butterflies migrate south in the winter, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Each species has found some way to withstand the sometimes harsh winter months of life in north Texas. Our four resident species of Swallowtails all spend the winter in the chrysalis stage, awaiting the first signs of spring before emerging. Members of

DCLS Volunteers Needed

There are currently two events in the upcoming months that offer the opportunity for DCLS members to participate.

March 13, 2004 the Dallas Museum of Natural History will be having its annual "Bug Day". DCLS will have a table and be handing out flyers, talking to the public, etc. The event is from 11 - 4 but you can make your own hours.

April 24, 2004 The Elm Fork Nature Fest at the Elm Fork Nature Preserve in Carrollton. Again, DCLS will have a table. There will be several types of "walks" — bird, flowers, butterflies, etc., so you can come to attend the Festival and sit behind the table a while too!

If this sounds like fun to you, just email Dale Clark at:
daleclark@dallasbutterflies.com or
 phone 972-274-0890.

other families use this method as well. Some of the Pieridae (Whites and Sulphurs) also pass the winter in the pupal stage, while others of this family literally get "killed back" to the southern portions of their range and are forced to re-emigrate northward the following year. The same can be said for some species in the other families.

Yet not all members of a family will necessarily use the same methods. Some of the Lycaenidae (Blues and Hairstreaks) spend the winter as pupae while others overwinter as eggs.

Members of the Nymphalidae (the Brushfoots) might spend the winter hibernating as adults, such as the Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*), while the Viceroy larva passes the cold months wrapped in its hibernaculum, still attached to a tree by a well placed piece of silk. Down on the ground, hidden in the leaf-litter, half grown larvae of the Tawny Emperor (*Asterocampa clyton*) huddle together on a silken pad on a dried up hackberry leaf and wait for spring.

Whatever the species, a way has been devised to ensure that life will continue despite the freezing cold, dreary days of winter.



Tiger Swallowtail pupae

The Butterfly Garden

A Winter Nectar Source: Pincushion Flower

by Tina Dombrowski

Despite the official designation of winter and all the subsequent temperature fluctuations, some plant species as well as some butterfly species, still make a stand in the North Texas region. Incorporating



Pincushion Flower
(*Scabiosa columbaria*)

a blooming nectar source into the garden other than or in addition to pansies and violas, will attract a surprising number of invertebrate species on sunny winter days. One such plant is the perennial 'Butterfly Blue' Pincushion Flower (*Scabiosa columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue').

Butterfly Blue, a Perennial Plant of the Year winner in 2000, grows as a tidy mound of gray-green foliage six to eight inches tall and up to 15 inches wide. The lavender-blue, lacy flowers are borne on 12 inch stems year round in this area. There is also a lavender-pink flowering form available named 'Pink Mist' (AKA Butterfly Pink) with identical growth features. 'Nana' is another lavender-blue flowered variety of *S. columbaria* which can be seed grown. Deadheading is reported to increase flowering, but Pincushion Flower flourishes without the extra work. Plants require a sunny, well drained site with regular moisture in the summer, but prefer drier conditions in the winter. While designated as a perennial, it can be short-lived and warrant replacement after three years.

Readily available in retail nursery trade, Pincushion Flower can be propagated by stem cuttings, division and, in some cases seed. Cuttings require eight weeks to root. Dividing the vegetative clumps can be performed in spring or fall. Seed should be top sown and will germinate in 14 - 21 days at 70 degrees.

As responsible butterfly gardeners, make sure the Pincushion Flower that you seek is the perennial *Scabiosa columbaria* and its named cultivars (cultivated varieties) or hybrids. In February 2000 while Butterfly Blue Pincushion Flower was accepting its honor as Perennial Plant of the year, the Dallas Morning News printed a front page article on the invasive ecological horrors of 'Sweet Scabiosa' (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*). Sweet Scabiosa, a reseeding biennial, was reported by DMN staff writer David Dillon as "...a European flowering plant introduced in the late 1980s by gardeners trying to attract butterflies." The subsequent fall-out from this news piece and associated publicity resulted in an individual demanding and succeeding in the removal of all Butterfly Blue Pincushion Flower from a Home Depot Nursery in Austin Texas!

Selection of the 'horticulturally' correct Pincushion Flower species will sustain the persistent Monarchs, Cabbage Whites, Sulfurs, Gulf Fritillaries and other winter invertebrates until warmer temperatures coax the spring flora.

Tina Dombrowski is the Director of Horticulture at Texas Discovery Gardens.

A Butterfly for All Seasons: Orange Sulphur (*Colias eurytheme*)

There are few butterflies as prolific as the Orange Sulphur (*Colias eurytheme*). In our area this species is on the wing every month of the year, peaking in numbers in the spring, particularly March - early May. The reason for this is that many of its major host plants are “cool weather” plants, species that flourish in the early spring (some of which are even around in the winter) such as White Clover, White Sweet Clover, Ground Plum and Vetch. As the temperatures rise throughout the summer populations in our area drop substantially because some of their more common host plants do not survive the heat. Even so, it can still be seen on virtually any outing throughout the year. The Orange Sulphur can sometimes be an agricultural pest on alfalfa.

Orange Sulphurs are both seasonally and sexually dimorphic, meaning that the males and females have different wing patterns which change throughout the season.

The Orange Sulphur is not so much



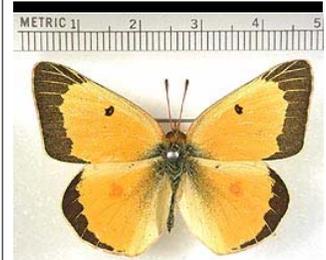
Female Orange Sulphur feeding on liatris.

orange as it is yellow from late November through mid-April. This is due to a shorter photoperiod (daylight) on the larvae. Individuals during this time also have more dark scaling on the underside of the hindwings to help them warm faster in the cooler months. As the days lengthen the amount of orange on the wings increases dramatically in successive generations.

The sexes can be differentiated by a quick glance at the black border on both the forewing and hindwing. Males have a solid black border, which is thinner in the cool winter months. Females also have a black border on the wings but within this border are yellow spots.

As is the case in numerous species of this family, there is a “white form” which occurs in some females, called “alba”. Naturally, the spots in the border of the form “alba” are white instead of yellow.

Host Plants: Leguminosae: Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicarpus*), Platte River Milk-Vetch (*Astragalus plattensis*), Wild Indigo (*Baptisa sp.*), Pursh's Deer Vetch (*Lotus unifoliolatus*), Bush Clovers (*Lespedeza sp.*), Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), White Sweet-Clover (*Melilotus albus*), Yellow Sweet-Clover (*Melilotus officinalis*), Coffee-Bean (*Sesbania herbacea*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Red



Female - form