

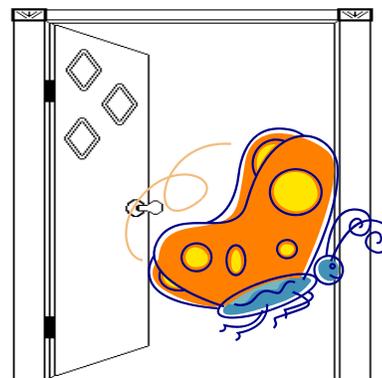
“Looking OUT THE BACK DOOR...”

The Sac County Conservation Board's

Summer 2011

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Quarterly Newsletter



Floating Flittering Fancies

It is the end of May and the Hummingbirds and Monarchs are back. These creatures make me think that summer is just around the corner. Summer is a great time for insects. One of the most appreciated groups of insects are the butterflies. These tiny creatures have some unique adaptations which help them to survive. They have tiny hairs on their body that help them to hear or sense movement in their environment. They can taste with their feet, and drink nectar with a long mouth part called a proboscis. It coils when not in use and unwinds to produce a straw like structure for slurping up nectar. On the four large wings they have many tiny overlapping rows of scales which give the wing color and help in flight. These wings that are thinner than a piece of paper are kept stiff by the blood that courses through the vanes of the wings. The uniqueness of scales on the wings is what puts them in the group Lepidoptera which in Latin Lepidos means scale and Ptera means wing. All butterflies go through complete metamorphosis or the 4-stage life cycle. Starting out as an egg, hatching into a larva (caterpillar), then they go into the rest and changing stage called pupa (chrysalis) and finally emerge as an adult. Butterflies are ectoderms and rely on the sun to warm their bodies. They may be seen sitting on a leaf in a sunny location occasionally pumping the wings. As you enjoy your summer days keep an eye out for these tiny fluttering gems. One of the most well known butterflies is the Monarch. While most

butterflies either over winter here in Iowa or other migrate short distances like Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Common Buckeye, the Monarch travels all of the way to South America. The Monarch is easy to spot with the bright orange and black although it can be confused with the Viceroy. The difference is the black V on the hind wings of the Viceroy and what they eat. Monarchs utilize milkweed plants as host plants where as Viceroy's are found on willow and cottonwood trees.



The next five butterflies are in the Nymphalidae family. The first butterfly is a very common butterfly seen during the summer is the Red Admiral. This butterfly is an erratic and rapid flier. These caterpillars feed on the leaves of the nettle family and will roll or tie leaves together to make a shelter. Adults drink tree sap, fermented fruit, nectar and bird droppings. The butterfly is easily identified by the red stripe and white spots on the tips of the wings.



The Painted Lady is the next common Iowa butterfly. Another name for

the Painted Lady is also known as the thistle butterfly as thistles tend to be one of their main food preferences as both an adult and larva. Their caterpillars live in silken shelters and feed off of over 100 different species of plants. These butterflies travel southward and can hibernate in mild winters. Sometimes large populations will migrate up from the south creating booms.

The top of the forewing is black with white spots, while most of the topside of the butterfly is orange with blackish spots. Look for the butterflies sitting on the open ground.



Painted Lady

The Common Buckeye was given its name due to the resemblance of the large spots on the wing to the nuts of the Buckeye tree. The spots may be used to mimic eyes to scare away predators. The caterpillars can be found eating on snapdragon, toadflax and plantain families. Adults drink nectar primarily from the sunflower family but can be seen on peppermint or dogbane.



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Photography Contest Winners



The Sac County Photograph Contest concluded on April 29th. There were many wonderful entries and we were very pleased to have had such great participation. Don Poggensee was the judge.

Don is pointing out the first place winning photo belonging to Gray Witty. Second place went to Chad Lankford for the photo of the frog croaking. Third place went to Don Wellington for the photo of a perched Eagle. After the judging Don explained the principles of photography and what he was looking for while judging. He also reviewed the photographs with the photographers and explained how the principles of photography applied to their photographs and how they could be improved by certain elements. Don did a great job and we all learned a little more about taking photographs in nature.

Looking into the fact files! Goldenrod



(*Spolidago Sp.*)

- There are over 25 species of goldenrod.
- Goldenrod is the state flower of Alabama, Kentucky and Nebraska .
- The tires on the first Model T Ford were made from a rubber produced by the Goldenrod plant
- The rubber was invented by Thomas Edison which cultivated 12 foot plants for extracting the naturally occurring rubber.
- This plant is often blamed for hay fever but these plants insect pollinated so the pollen is not put in the wind. However it does bloom when ragweed is releasing it's pollen into the air.
- One Goldenrod the *Solidago bicolor* is white.
- Galls are often found on Goldenrod, inside these galls are developing insect larvae
- The Goldenrod is a very effective treatment for Urinary Tract infections, although it has been used to treat sore throats and fatigue.
- The Scientific name *Solidago* means to make whole or to heal.
- Perennial growing from underground rhizomes and can inhabit open areas.

Thank You

Don Poggensee for judging the photo contest and to everyone who submitted photographs.

A special thank you goes out to everyone who helped with Conservation Field Days. We couldn't have such a great educational day without you.

Dave Hoffman and the Iowa DNR for the donation of swans to be released.

Thanks to the Western Iowa Power Co-op in Denison for the woodchips.

Tom Duncan and the Iowa DNR for the lowater training.



Upcoming Programs

Summer Camps

Cost for the camps will be as follows: 5-7 year old -\$20.00; 8-10 year old -\$30.00; 11-13 year old -\$40.00. These costs cover t-shirts, materials for crafts, snacks and field trips where applicable. To register your child for a camp, call the Sac County Conservation Board Office at (712) 662-4530. Camps are limited to 12 children.

Forest Night, Forest Bright - June 21-23rd - Ages 5-7 - 9:00-11:30 or 1:00-3:30

Why do ants live in colonies? What colors and shapes do wildflowers and wildlife come in? What does the rain and wind do for us and nature? Become a nature detective and learn the answers to these questions and much more!

Out of this World - June 28-30th Ages 8-10 - 10:00 -2:00

Look for meteorites, learn about constellations and objects in space as well as space travel through many games and activities. Visit the Cherokee planetarium and canoe or paddleboat at Spring Lake Park.

Birder Basics - July 12-14th Ages 8-10 - 10:00 -2:00

Do you like to watch the birds? We will explore the amazing world of birds from adaptations to identification and their habitat needs. Hike for birds and get to see live birds up close!

Outdoor Survival Camp - July 19-22nd - Ages 11-14 - 10:00 -3:00

Learn outdoor survival skills like fire building, archery, shelter building and much more! Spend a day canoeing down the Raccoon River and camp primitively at McDonald Greenbelt.

Buggy Basics - August 3rd- 5th - Ages 5-7 - 9:00-11:30 or 1:00-3:30

Insects do amazing things! Can you imagine breathing through holes in your body, hearing with your ears or tasting with your feet? We will learn about the awesome adaptations and habitats of these amazing creatures.



August 18th- Fishing Club Meeting- The Sac County Extension and Conservation Board are forming a fishing club. This club is for anyone in second grade or above. To start the club we invite anyone interested to meet at the Sac County Conservation Center on August 18th at 6 pm. We will go over our goals for the club and tie a jig for the kids to use when they go fishing.

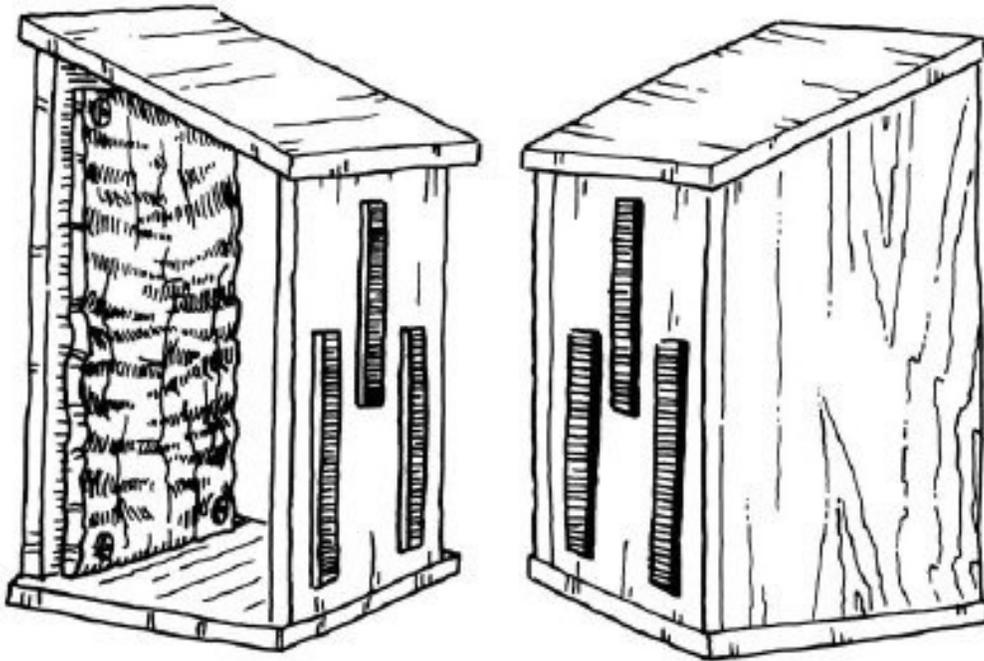
If you are interested but can't make the meeting please call 712-662-4530.

August 27th- Knee High Naturalist- This program is geared for kids aged 2-4 years old with many interactive activities. The program will take place at the Sac County Conservation Center from 10-11 am. Call 712-662-4530 to reserve your spot.



Look forward to Halloween Night Hike information!

Kid's Korner



Building a butterfly house is a fun project that adds habitat to your yard. Be sure to ask for help or supervision when using saws and hammers. Butterflies need places of shelter during bad weather and from the cold. They may also utilize them while migrating or even to hibernate in. Normally butterflies use cracks in trees or buildings. Once the houses are built paint them and mount them in the shade preferably by a nectar source like a butterfly garden.

What You'll Need:

Cutting tool: Hand saw, table saw, ect.
Pine lumber (6"x1/2"x7")
Scrap of pine (8" wide)
Hammer
Nails
Pieces of tree bark or floral moss
Wood glue

How to Make a Butterfly House:

Step 1: Cut pine boards to the following dimensions:

Two sides: 6"x18"

Cut an angle so that one side is 18 inches long and the other side is 17 inches long.

One back: 4-1/2"x18"

One front: 4-1/2"x17"

One bottom: 4-1/2"x6"

One top: 7"x7"

Step 2: Cut three 12-inch long slits in the front, make the slits one inch wide and off set. Nail the bark or moss to the back piece to give the butterflies something to cling to.

Step 3: Align the back to the sides and nail into back piece. Use a little wood glue if you like.

Step 4: Put the front in between the two side pieces and nail in place. Nail on the bottom and the top.



Cut out and put together this butterfly puzzle



Continued from page 1. Mourning Cloak

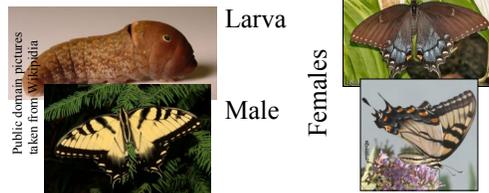
One of my favorites is the Morning Cloak. I will forever remember the image of a Morning Cloak fluttering around the snow trillium during an early spring walk, after a long winter this was the first flower and butterfly I had seen in some time. The Morning Cloak over-winters in the adult stage tucked in the bark of trees. Caterpillars live and eat communally in a web like structure on willow, birch, elm or hackberry trees. The adults drink tree sap by facing downward, but they will also feed from rotten fruit and occasionally on flowers. These dark butterflies have a row of blue spots and a yellow margins on the wings. The Eastern Commas and Question Marks are often seen but over looked. These butterflies have similarities.



Eastern Comma

Question Mark

First is in behavior, the males of both species perch and look for females and both will chase off anything that gets in their space like other insects or even birds. They use similar host plants like elms, hops and nettles. Even as adults they may both land on rotten fruit, or tree sap. Although the question mark may also be found on carrion, dung and sometimes flowers. Both species get their name by the shape of the whiteish to silvery spot on the outer side of their hind wing. The next group of butterflies belong to the Swallowtail family. These butterflies have the characteristic drip look on their hind wing. The first kind is the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. The males are yellow with black stripes while the females can either be yellow with black stripes like the male or black with blue hind wings. The snake looking caterpillars eat on cherry, basswood and, birch, ash and cottonwood trees. They

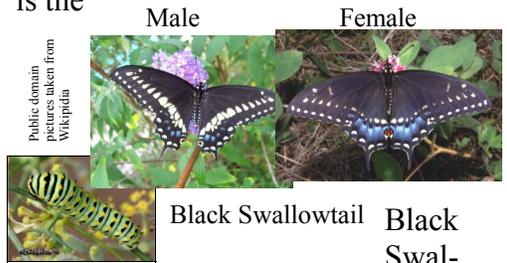


Larva

Male

Females

make silken mats in rolled leaves. The adults drink nectar from many flowers including cherry and lilacs. Another commonly seen Swallowtail is the



Male

Female

Black Swallowtail Black Swallowtail

lowtail. These butterflies hibernate in the chrysalis and are the common caterpillars eating on

your carrot or dill plants. The larvae feed on plants in the parsley family while adults generally nectar on clover milkweeds and thistles. Males and females look different, notice the yellow striping and blue patches.

A small blue butterfly often seen is the Eastern Tailed Blue. This butterfly can be seen drinking from shallow puddles formed in the potholes on roadways. It lays its eggs on buds of plants in the pea family and the cater-



Eyes To The Skies

- June 1st– New Moon
- June 21st– Summer Solstice– The north pole will now be tilted towards the sun meaning warmer longer days for us.
- July 1st–New Moon
- July 15–Full Moon– This month’s moon has been known as the Buck Moon as the bucks are starting to grow their antlers for the fall rut.
- July 30th–New Moon
- August 11th– Neptune in Opposition– The blue planet will be closest to our planet and it will illumined by the sun. But it is so far away it will look like just a tiny blue dot to all but strong telescopes.
- August 13th– Perseids Meteor Shower– This shower may be seen from July 23rd-Aug. 22nd. The full moon will be a bit of a problem but if you go to a dark location you should still be able to see a great show. This shower will peak at about 60 meteors per hour.
- August 13th– Full Moon– This moon has been known as the Sturgeon Moon as it is the time when the sturgeon are most easily caught.
- August 29th–New Moon



Planting a Butterfly Garden

There are some things to consider when making a butterfly garden. First, butterflies are cold blooded creatures who often need to warm up in the sun, also some of the best nectar producing plants require lots of sun. Secondly, butterflies need water, however they can't land in open water so a shallow dish with rocks or sponges provide a place to safely land while they drink. Many butterflies will eat from rotting fruit so leaving out opened oranges and such will help attract butterflies and even some birds. Next, butterflies need places for shelter like trees or boxes. Trees are a great addition to any landscaping. If trees are not possible in the landscaping plans consider woody bushes and boxes. Lastly, the needs of all stages of the butterflies lifecycle must be met. This means that a good garden provides nectaring plants for the adults, safe areas to pupate, and a variety of host plants for eggs to be laid upon and for caterpillars to eat. The plants that you grow will depend on the amount of light and soil conditions at your site and what butterflies you intend to attract. There is a great list on the Iowa State University Extension Service site. The URL is: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/RG603.pdf>. On this site the individual butterflies are listed with their host plants for larvae and finally the nectar sources from the adults. Another great site is: <http://www.thebutterflysite.com/gardening.shtm>. On this site there are ideas for garden plans, ideas for sprucing up a butterfly garden as well as a list of butterflies in your area that would be easy to attract. This site also has a list of butterfly houses to visit all over the US. Of course the nurseries in our county are also very knowledgeable on plants that attract butterflies, if you simply visit a local nursery they will be able to help you pick out plants for your site. If you are interested in butterflies, the Monarch Watch site may intrigue you. Can you imagine being able to catch, tag and release the Monarch butterflies that visit or were reared in your garden. Monarch watch is located at the following URL: www.monarchwatch.org. This site also sells seeds to attract butterflies, and more specifically Monarchs. Now that you have the information, it is time to get **dirty and make your own piece of butterfly habitat.**

The last butterfly is commonly seen at Hagge Park. The Hackberry Emperor is a medium sized brown butterfly. The host for caterpillars are Hackberry leaves. Eggs are laid in clusters and caterpillars eat communally on the Hackberry trees. It is also in this stage that they overwinter, caterpillars group together in rolled leaves and hibernate there until spring. Adults tend to drink from sap, rotting fruit, dung, carrion. They may be seen taking moisture at wet spots along roads and streams. These butterflies can be seen resting upside-down on tree trunks. There are many butterflies that come out during the summer.



This list is just a sampling of the floating fluttering fancy critters that can be seen during the summer.



Sac County Conservation Board

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Chris Bass—Executive Director
 Sandi Huster—Secretary
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Meetings

Regular board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Hagge Park office. These meetings are open to the public.

Hagge Park Office Phone: (712) 662-4530
 Email: saccocon@frontiernet.net

The Sac County Conservation Board in the provisions of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Sac County Conservation Board Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240