You Are What You Eat
Photodocumentation of Caterpillar Foodplants

In the last issue of *American Butterflies*, we initiated a project to document the caterpillar foodplants of North American butterflies. However, we apparently did not clearly describe the criteria for this photodocumentation, because although quite a few NABA members submitted photos for use in this series, most did not meet the required criteria.

For those who would like to participate in this photodocumentation, here is another try at letting you know what to do:

1. Find an egg or a caterpillar (or a group of eggs or caterpillars) on a single plant in the “wild” (this includes gardens).

2. Follow this particular egg or caterpillar (or group of eggs or caterpillars) through to adulthood, with the following documentation.

3. Photograph the actual individual plant on which the egg(s) or caterpillar(s) was found, showing any key features needed for the identification of the plant.

4. Photograph the egg(s) or caterpillar(s).

5. Either leave the egg(s) or caterpillar(s) on the original plant, perhaps sleeving the plant it is on with netting, allowing the caterpillar(s) to develop in the wild, or remove the egg(s) or caterpillar(s) to your home and feed it only the same species of plant on which it was found.

6. Photograph later instars of the caterpillar(s).

7. Photograph the resulting chrysalis.

8. Photograph the adult after it emerges from the chrysalis.

9. If the egg(s) or caterpillar(s) was brought into your home for raising, release the adult back into the wild at the spot where you found it.

We would like to document each plant species used by each North American butterfly species, as well as plant species usage for each state or province.

In addition to appearing in *American Butterflies*, the results of this project will be posted to the NABA website. Please send us any butterfly species/plant species/state or province trio that is not already posted.

Opposite page

*Left:* This Zizotes Milkweed was growing in Berry Nall’s garden in Falcon Heights, Starr County, Texas in September, 2009.

*Right top:* On September 17, 2009, Berry found a number of Monarch eggs on the plant.

*Right middle:* On September 19, 2009, a caterpillar began to emerge from one of the eggs.

*Right bottom:* The caterpillar continued its emergence (continued on page 44).
Top left: The one day old caterpillar on Sept. 20, 2009.


Top right: Sept. 27, 2009.


Rightmost photo: Pre-emergent chrysalis on Oct. 8, 2009.

Opposite page top: Adult after emerging.

Berry Nall

Visit www.nababutterfly.com to learn how you can join the growing group of gardeners who are sharing their love of gardening and concern for the environment by certifying their butterfly gardens and habitats.