

Badger Butterfly

The e-Newsletter of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association **SEPTEMBER, 2008**

WEB SITE: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

1 NEXT FIELD TRIP

(For a complete list of SWBA field trips and butterfly counts, visit our web site listed above.)

Saturday, September 6 10:30 a.m.--noon Fall Butterflies at Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Trip leaders: Ann Thering and Joan Braune
Co-sponsors: SWBA, Olbrich Botanical Gardens,
Madison Audubon Society

Last year many beautiful butterfly species that migrate from the south found their way to Wisconsin. Possible immigrant species at Olbrich include Fiery Skipper, Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Red Admiral, Gray Hairstreak, Pipevine Swallowtail, and Little Yellow, all of which were seen at Olbrich in 2007. The Pipevine is an especially spectacular butterfly, big and black, with an iridescent blue sheen (males). Olbrich has several plantings of the attractive vine, called Pipevine (*Aristolochia tomentosa* or *A. macrophylla*), which the adult butterflies lay their eggs on, and the caterpillars eat. Pipevines don't

reach Wisconsin every year, but we might get lucky!

Other butterflies we could see include Eastern-tailed Blue, American Lady, Monarch, Viceroy, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Black Swallowtail, Silver-Spotted Skipper, and Peck's Skipper. Olbrich Gardens are especially beautiful this time of year; many good butterfly nectar sources should be blooming, including asters, milkweeds, verbenas, zinnias, sedums, salvias, butterfly bush, buttonbush, and more.

Dress for protection from the heat, sun and insects. A hat is recommended. Bring binoculars (the closer they can focus the better the view -- a few extra binoculars are available). Stormy weather could cancel the trip. If you have any questions about the field trip contact Ann Thering, (608) 836-1097, therannc@yahoo.com or Joan Braune, jbraune@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 10:30 a.m. in the garden, just outside the lobby of Olbrich.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens is located in Madison on the East side of Lake Monona at 3330 Atwood Avenue.

THIS CONCLUDES THE 2008 SWBA FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE.

2 NEXT SWBA MEETING

**OCTOBER 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Madison at the Warner Park
Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive**

Conservation of the Swamp Metalmark Butterfly

The Swamp Metalmark is listed as an endangered species in Wisconsin. **Susan Borkin of the Milwaukee Public Museum** will present an overview of her research on the natural history of this tiny, beautiful and rare butterfly here in Wisconsin and preliminary efforts to reintroduce it. She will also discuss various elements that are important for the conservation of this species throughout its range.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free program. The meeting will last from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We will have plenty of time afterwards to enjoy refreshments and talk with other butterfly enthusiasts.

(If anyone would like to volunteer to provide refreshments, contact Joan Braune at jbraune@sbcglobal.net)

DIRECTIONS: On Madison's north side, from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Northport Drive (= Hwy 113) go west on Northport Drive for about 1/4 mile, then turn south into Warner Park. Turn immediately



SWAMP METALMARK

right into the Community Center parking lot. When you enter the Community Center we will be in the meeting room on the left.

3 FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

On Saturday, August 9, Mike Reese led a field trip along the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway at Avoca Wildlife Area and Blue River Sand Barrens State Natural Area. It was a great day with 14 enthusiastic participants. We found 118 individuals of 26 species including Juniper (Olive) Hairstreak, Black, Eastern Tiger and Giant Swallowtails, Common Buckeye, Common Roadside-Skipper and Common Sootywing (in spite of the names these three are not common in Wisconsin!), American Copper, Aphrodite Fritillary, Viceroy and Tawny-edged Skipper.

The scarce Juniper Hairstreak refused to come down out of its food plant, a Red Cedar Tree. But fortunately it was not a tall tree and we got a good enough view to identify it.



Juniper Hairstreak

4 SUMMARY OF AUGUST BUTTERFLIES (www.wisconsinbutterflies.org)



Common Buckeye

We've all enjoyed the good numbers of Swallowtails this month, Black, Eastern Tiger, and Giant Swallowtail (which is our largest butterfly). Although 2007 was the best year in anyone's memory for late summer and fall migrants from the South, 2008 has been very limited in southern migrants so far. The most notable exception is the Common Buckeye. Usually pretty scarce, it had its biggest year ever in 2007. This year it has been turning up with some regularity.

Rare butterflies with but a single reported sighting in August included a stray Marine Blue seen by Ann Thering. (She has had an unprecedented 2 Marine Blues this year -- only the 4th and 5th times it has been reported for Wisconsin). Another SWBA member, Tori Graham, spotted a Marine Blue

in mid-July in Illinois at her monitoring site, Blackwell Forest Preserve. Other scarce sightings were Purplish Fritillary (Douglas Co.), and

immigrants Gray Hairstreak, Little Yellow, Fiery Skipper and Sachem. A small number of Painted Ladies were reported. **SEND IN YOUR SIGHTINGS OF BUTTERFLIES ONLINE AT www.wisconsinbutterflies.org**

5 BUTTERFLY GARDENING: ROUGH BLAZING-STAR

By Dorothy Legler, Master Gardener.

The "star" of dry prairies that is blooming right now is **Rough Blazing-Star** (*Liatris aspera*). It is one of 20 or so *Liatris* species in North America. Wisconsin has 5 native species of *Liatris*. The time for flowering is from August to October. It will flower from rhizomes the first year and from seeds the second or third year. It grows 16" to 48" tall.

Rough Blazing-Star will grow in sandy to well drained soil. Seed may be sown outside in the fall in a cold frame or seedbed. It germinates in the spring and can be transplanted into pots or a protected spot when they are 2" to 3" tall. Seeds may be started indoors in the winter. Don't cover seeds with soil. For best germination put a moist seed tray into a perforated plastic bag in the crisper of your refrigerator for 4-6 weeks. Then take them out and grow at warmer temperatures. Plants are also available at local nurseries and mail order sources.



All of the *Liatris* species are great nectar sources for butterflies, especially for the later-flying ones. In winter the birds will eat the fluffy seeds. For more information on growing see the two reference sources and web sites listed below.

The Prairie Garden by J. Robert Smith with Beatrice S. Smith

Growing Perennials in Cold Climates by Mike Heger and John Whitman

Prairie Nursery: www.prairienursery.com

Prairie Moon Nursery: www.prairiemoon.com

6 CATERPILLAR EDUCATION AT THE WISCONSIN STATE FAIR



Thanks to **Noel Cutright** for this contribution:

At the Wisconsin State Fair that concluded on Sunday, August 10, We Energies used a very nice park-like setting called Energy Park to present a variety of programs and demonstrations throughout the day. A rather large variety of native plantings are in the Park, and there is a small vegetable and herb garden that is used by Chef Mark in his twice-a-day cooking demonstration.

On the 2nd day of the Fair, I noted 15 **Black Swallowtail caterpillars** feeding on curly parsley in the herb garden. This location is a very urban setting in West Allis and is adjacent to heavy traffic. I called their presence to the attention of Melinda Myers who

gave 2 garden presentations a day, and she pointed out their presence each day of the Fair. I estimate that approximately 300 - 400 folks were able to view and learn about these caterpillars.

7 TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

Although this is not a NABA event, the 13th annual Texas Butterfly Festival is great fun and will be held on **October 16th to 19th, 2008**, in Mission, Texas, located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, “the most biologically diverse region in the United States”. This is a great event! (Be sure to visit the NABA International Butterfly Park in Mission.) For more information go to www.texasbutterfly.com/

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SWBA

The Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association (SWBA) is a non-profit Wisconsin chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) which is the largest organization of people interested in butterflies. SWBA promotes public awareness, conservation and the enjoyment of butterflies through observation with close-focusing binoculars, chapter field trips, educational meetings, photography, butterfly gardening, monitoring and travel. Most of SWBA's events are open to the public.

To become a member of SWBA simply join NABA. Membership benefits include 2 color quarterly magazines “American Butterflies” and “Butterfly Gardening”. Please use the membership form on the SWBA website at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabawba/>

Our e-Newsletter, the Badger ButterFlyer, will be published monthly in summer and every other month in winter. Send any news notes to the editor, Karl Legler, at karlndot@chorus.net

To stop receiving this e-Newsletter simply send an email to the above editor's address.