

New Mexico Butterflies



Queen

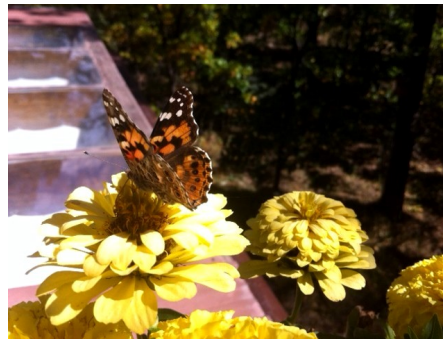
Queen Butterfly Breeds in Southern NM Summer & Fall

Early Greeks considered butterflies to be dead people's spirits. In many countries, pictures of butterflies can be seen on tombstones. In Finland some people believe the butterfly soul of a dreaming person flutters peacefully above the bed, and the Germans say a person in love has "butterflies in the belly."

Jo Ann T. Layden, Bird & Butterfly Chairman NMGC, INC. 2015-2017



Western Tiger Swallowtail in Pink Phlox, Taos, NM. NM has 12 types of Swallowtails !



Painted Lady on Marigolds , photo by Carolin Sanders, Black Lake, NM

"Stay near me - do not take thy flight! A little longer stay in sight!"...

Butterflies
In New
Mexico

New
Mexico
Garden
Clubs, Inc.



Peter Gorman

Monarch Butterfly
Belongs to the Brush Footed
Family

Whisper a wish to a butterfly,
Native American legends say,
and your wish will come true.

Butterflies Abound in New Mexico!

We are so lucky! In New Mexico there are, in fact, about 300 plus different species of butterflies! We are ranked **third** in the nation in number of butterfly species! The Southern part



Western Tailed Blues

of our State has about 160 of those. First to arrive in the south, as it warms up and flowers begin to bloom, are the “Blues” such as Spring Azure, Arizona Blue, Arizona Silvery Blue, Rita Dotted Blue, Silvery Blue, Pygmy Blue, Marine Blue, Spalding’s Blue, and Gossamer Winged Western Tailed Blues. Interesting fact: the “Blues” have a fascinating relationship with ants - the larvae of blues secrete fluids that ants love to eat. In return, some species of ants chase away wasps and flies that would otherwise parasitically lay their own eggs on top of the blue larvae! Another butterfly that breeds in the summer and fall in southern NM is the mahogany colored Queen, related to the Monarch. Like the Monarch, they also eat milkweed, which is poisonous to predators, but not to them! It won’t kill the predator, just tastes very bad to the bird or reptile.

We don’t have the space to name the many species and sub-species of butterflies found in New Mexico. A reminder though, that there is a desperate need to protect all our butterflies by avoiding the use of pesticides especially neonicotinoids, which are systemic, meaning that when they are applied, plants absorb and distribute the compounds to all parts of the plant, making the leaves, nectar, pollen, and woody tissue toxic to insects and other arthropods that feed on them. Neonicotinoid and other insecticides, like resmethrin, permethrin, organophosphates, carbamates, and insecticidal soaps that are often used in plant nurseries also have a negative impact on pollinators. Check the plants you purchase to ensure that they are not harmful to butterflies, caterpillars, bees and other pollinators.

The **Monarchs** are especially in the spotlight because they are disappearing, due in part to the pesticides we as a nation are using. How do we help save them? Start by planting flowering native plants, such as milkweed, purple coneflower, zinnias, parsley, dill, fennel, and asters. Milkweed is necessary for Monarchs—they lay their eggs on them and that’s the only food their caterpillars eat. Although most Monarchs live east of the Rockies, they do migrate through NM and anything we can do to save the species will help. Monarchs



Male © Paul A. Opler
Southern Rocky Mountain Orangetip

belong to the brush foot family, easily identified because they have only four functional walking legs while other butterflies have six. It is fascinating to spend time researching the many species of butterflies we have in NM and then look for them in your yard.

You will fall in love with them!

THINGS TO DO: Plant native flowering plants—many butterflies and native flowering plants depend on each other for survival and reproduction, Native plants provide butterflies with the nectar or foliage they need as adults and caterpillars. **Plant type and color is important**—Adult butterflies are attracted to red, yellow, orange, pink and purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes. **Plant good nectar sources in the sun** - Butterfly nectar source plants should receive full sun from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Butterfly adults generally feed only in the sun. If sun is limited in your landscape, try adding butterfly nectar sources to the vegetable garden. **Say no to insecticides** - They are marketed to kill insects. Don't use these materials in or near the butterfly garden or better, anywhere on your property. Even "benign" insecticides are lethal to caterpillars). **Feed butterfly caterpillars** - If you don't "grow" caterpillars, there will be no butterflies.. Bringing in caterpillar foods into your garden can greatly increase your chances of attracting butterflies, while giving you yet another reason to plant a variety of native plants. Most butterfly caterpillars never cause the leaf damage we associate with some moth caterpillars. **Provide a place for butterflies to rest** -they need sun for orientation and to warm their wings for flight. Place flat stones in your garden to provide space for butterflies to rest and bask in the sun. **Give them a place for puddling** -Place coarse sand in a shallow pan and then insert the pan in the soil of your habitat. Make sure to keep the sand moist.