

Spring : New Beginnings!

We've been busy! The office of the MBNZT has moved from Russell, Bay of Islands, to Auckland. We now have our very own Post Office Box, at Pt Chevalier so please note this address. We urge you to use email as the quickest method of contacting us, but there are also alternative phone numbers on 09 403 8543.

Mail or bankings to the earlier addresses will not go astray.

We are sure you'll enjoy this newsletter, with tips for your spring garden, reports of what we've been doing in different parts of the country, some fascinating lepidoptera to look out for, and more information about our beautiful calendar, an original work, never been one like it before... and orders close soon!

the Trustees



Not a butterfly – but watch out for this on your Buddleias! It's an introduced bio-control agent, *Cleopus japonicus*, working to rid our country of the wild Buddleias that are creating havoc for farmers, forestry and invading our bush. But it could also be at work in your garden. Learn more inside.



Who is this butterfly? Nine-year-olds Jordan Busch (left) and Diana Vehikite both know it's really their teacher, Nikki Townsend at Blenheim School.

Thanks to The Sun Newspaper, Blenheim for photograph.

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Reader of the Monarch Newsletter.

The Butterfly and Orchid Garden is not NZ's last but was NZ's first butterfly house. Our love for butterflies drove us to change existing laws in order to be able to open a live butterfly house in Aotearoa. We opened our doors in 1998 with a display of Monarchs and Australian butterflies. After a long fight in the year 2000 we were granted import permit for 75 different species of tropical butterflies from all over the world. 4 years later the Butterfly Creek opened its doors to visitors. The Otago Museum butterfly house was created and designed under our consultancy. It has the smallest foot print and is the newest addition in our butterfly house history.

The Butterfly and Orchid Garden works constantly behind the scenes for the interest of butterflies e.g. endemic butterflies such as red and yellow admirals by educating school children and providing consultancy services in NZ. The Butterfly House in Thames might be less aggressive in its ways to promote business, but it is definitely not the last to promote butterflies in NZ.

Sabine

Our apologies to Sabine and anyone who misinterpreted the use of the word 'last' in the review of NZ's three butterfly houses in the winter issue. Ed.

Caterpillar Castles



Following the success of a trial order in March we have now added these large castles to our line-up of items for sale.

These are great to have indoors so you can view the life cycle. Collapsible, lightweight and durable, they fold almost flat.

They are washable, and can be treated with 10% bleach to sanitise before reuse. They have a large zippered opening for easy access and a clear vinyl full-side window for easy viewing of contents. Fine mesh sides promote healthy air flow but will stop ants, wasps and other nasty predators. The fabric will wick away moisture fast to keep contents dry.

These will be available at \$20 plus postage (financial members), and \$25 plus postage for non-members. Orders will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis, cash with order please to PO Box 44100, Pt Chevalier, 1246 OR by directly banking into the MBNZT account with Kiwibank, 38 9009 0654693 00.

Darren

Trustees

During September we sadly received the resignation of Beverley Sinclair, trustee, due to ill health. Beverley has been on our board since January 2008 and as well as having a delightful butterfly garden in the suburb of Mt Albert, gave of her skills and talents in administration of many of the intensive tasks in our day-to-day running.

She will be very much missed but we hope that with less responsibility she will be able to focus on making a full recovery; health is so important.

We are currently seeking more trustees and would welcome applications from anyone interested in serving. Please email trust@monarch.org.nz and we will send you some background material and application form.

While over recent months the trustees have been sharing the role of chairmanship of their meetings, Norm Twigge has now agreed to be chairman.

We are still looking for a treasurer and this may well be of interest to a member in the western suburbs of Auckland. Although we still retain a bank account with Westpac, we now also bank with Kiwibank.

MBNZT Library

The Monarch Trust has had a collection of over eighty books, many of them collectors editions and excellent resource material, donated to them.

These are being catalogued at present and we are negotiating with the National Library for them to hold the collection on our behalf, and manage them so that they are made available to people throughout NZ.

We will keep you informed of progress, and a list of titles will eventually be available on the website.

Do you have seeds to spare?

We're on the lookout for milkweed seeds – swan plant, giant swan, tropical milkweed and/or swamp milkweed. We are able to sell these, and it is a very useful fundraiser for the MBNZT.

It is important to collect them when they are absolutely ripe (that is, the day that they pop open and get scattered on the wind, or the day before that). If you can remove the fluff and any other 'stuff' including wildlife like mites, and send them to us clearly labelled, we do appreciate it. Please tell us which plant they have come from, the season they were collected, and also your name.

Not only do we sell the seed, but much is given away to schools. To help keep them dry store them in paper boxes or paper bags – not plastic – and the chemist or local shoe shop will be happy to recycle desiccants, those little 'packages' that keep things dry.

Also, if you have nectar plants going to seed and don't mind sharing the seeds, these are also very useful.

Hope you can help, and thank you to all those who have done so to date.



What Shall I Plant for NEXT Spring?

With the round of daffodil shows now touring the country I have these beauties very much in mind. I have been looking around the National Daffodil Show in Palmerston North and am reminded of the importance of scent and colour to bring butterflies to the garden.

During the winter I long for the first of the daffodils to tell me spring is here. If the heart needs a lift the best way to get some early cheerful flowers with a lot of scent is to plant a few of the Tazetta group of daffodils which will flower in late winter before the bigger trumpets begin. This group has many flowers to a stem and a very strong scent. I have seen butterflies floating along the scent-lines in the air, and although they don't appear to be high in the nectar stakes, they do provide a little nectar. The scent will bring your butterflies to any nearby winter-flowering *Buddleia auriculata* or *Buddleia* 'Spring Promise' for a drink.

Well spring has sprung and you will have noticed the stirrings that herald this lovely time of year. Many of you in the warmer realms will have the occasional butterfly making an appearance on fine, still days. These overwintering butterflies carry the responsibility for bringing us the next generation. They will need to feed and find flowers, so as well as buying yourself some swanplant seeds and getting them under way for the caterpillars, keep in mind the importance of attracting the early butterflies into your garden. Bulbs are terrific for this job because they are often easy to grow, will reproduce, and if you put a few into a small space they will come up reliably every year advancing their own numbers.



If you are a novice gardener and would like a little colour to bring the butterflies near, try grape hyacinths, freesias, daffodils (ask a grower about early flowering varieties), Spraxias are good too for an exposed nectary and strong colours. You will surprise yourself at how easily these bulbs will grow, and let's face it, easily grown things give a sense of success! Make a note in your diary to buy some easy bulbs in autumn when they are dormant – planting time – and then you will have your earliest scent and flowers for next spring.

Buy your milkweed (e.g. swan plant) seeds from the MBNZT. The swan plant will thrive very well once settled in without much fuss and bother on quite dry ground. If you have a wetter corner, have a go at growing *Asclepias curassavica* which is much lower growing, likes more moisture and has flowers in shades of yellows, reds and oranges, and seedpods that are shaped like canoes rather than swans.

There is no such thing as too many plants! I can't emphasise this enough – jam them in – plant them close – they will jostle for space and let them!! Plant bulbs under other things – you will forget they are there and THEY will remind you with their appearance through and among other things.

NEVER EVER say 'Oh I'm no good at gardening!' I get so sick of hearing this phrase – no-one ever became good at anything without having a go and some good pointers to success: instead ask a seasoned gardener in your neighbourhood for some sure-fire easy things to grow. Gardening is not as popular as it once was, but please keep in mind that the BUTTERFLIES are not given to the fancies of fashion!

Your very best bet is to ask the elderly folk in your street to give you a few pointers – most of them grew up gardening, and not only will they relish the chance to have contact with some younger folk, but you might even go home with a few cuttings. ☺ Many of the plants grown long ago are the ones highest in nectar.

I hear many people say that they had quite a few butterflies around their swanplants and then where have they all gone? To the flowers – that's where – grow some – the butterflies will love you for it.

Jane Carver

Nelson Ecofest, 21-22 August 2010

The annual Nelson Ecofest is now one of the biggest events in the country for environmentally friendly products, services and messages. It gets bigger and better! This was the third year running that local members of Monarch Butterfly Trust have had a presence there. We were one of 144 stalls, and I think we provided a decorative effect between the solar panels and the cloth nappies!

Over 6000 people visited Ecofest, which was excellent considering the competing events on Saturday: in the morning, the famous Nelson market, and in the afternoon a rugby match at the adjacent Trafalgar Park between our local team, Tasman Makos, and Canterbury before an audience of over 10,000 (*Makos won 27-25*).

We had five people on the stand this year, which made it easier to staff. Tony, Rae, Kath and I were there for most of both days, while Mary came in between 12 and 2 so the rest of us could have lunch and look at the other stands.

Our primary purpose is to provide information, and we spent most of our time talking to people and answering questions. We handed out 218 of the leaflets "How you can help NZ butterflies and moths" and all 74 back-copies of the newsletters that we had been given. We also distributed posters about *Pieris brassicae*, the Large White Butterfly, a potentially serious new pest which was discovered (by Rae) in Nelson city in June.

Rae brought in some 'livestock': a rather sleepy Asian paper wasp, a female African praying mantis, and four yellow admiral caterpillars. The wasp and the mantis were there as examples of pests, and they proved good talking points. It is surprising how many people still don't know the difference between the native and the introduced African mantis. We couldn't find a live native one, and had to make do with a photo from NZ Geographic. It is sad that in Nelson city the native mantis has almost disappeared,

while the aggressive African species is becoming more and more of a predator on monarch caterpillars and butterflies.

The yellow admiral caterpillars provided a lot of entertainment.

Tony supplied them with nice fresh nettle stems to munch on while they were on display. During Sunday the largest caterpillar decided that he/she wanted to go and pupate, but we were afraid he/she would do it somewhere totally inappropriate, and we had to keep a close eye on him/her. A couple of times it happened that we were all busy for a few minutes and then said, "Oh no, where has that caterpillar gone to?" Passing small children had to be roped in to find the caterpillar with their sharp eyes. Rae took it home, and it has since pupated.

The caterpillars we had on the stand last year created a lot of interest in nettles, and this year we came prepared with twenty plants of *Urtica dioica* and a flyer about how to grow them. All the plants sold, so there may be an increase in numbers of yellow and red admirals in years to come!

We also had various nectar plants for sale, as well as items provided by the Trust. Loyal supporter Lars Jensen of Richmond Plains Vineyards provided a wonderful first prize for our raffle – three bottles of wine, including their delicious Monarch Rosé. I was very pleased when this was won by someone who lives only two blocks from me; I had been worrying about courier costs if it had been won by someone from Auckland or Dunedin!

Another raffle prize was a delightful monarch brooch, handmade from felt and beads, donated by Katy McRae of Christchurch. Check out Katy's monarch brooches at www.threadmark.co.nz, as well as her other craftwork.



Kath, Rae and I wore the blue 'Flowers that fly' T-shirts, which are great for identification. Several times, while I was looking at other stands, a person would tap me on the shoulder and say: "Hey, Monarch Lady! Can you give me some advice?" Fortunately, none of the questions were too difficult.

A two-day event like the Ecofest takes a lot of organising, but is worthwhile if it increases public awareness of the value of monarchs and other lepidoptera species. What sort of a world would it be without butterflies in it?

Chrissie



Lucky Draw Winners

Here are the lucky prize winners – people who renewed/joined before the end of July and won one of the six lucky draws.

If you've missed out, never fear... we might come up with some other initiatives in the future to encourage you to help us with our fundraising.

A Box of Bugs – Michele Rosser

Butterfly Creek passes – Jan Delaney

Caterpillar soft toy – Janis Hibbert

Ocean Organics – Jannette Curran

Tui Garden Products – Barbara Milne

Umbrella – Christina Needham

We had a delightful letter back from Janis Hibbert (thank you Janis):

Thank you all so much. It's a beautiful caterpillar and a complete surprise. My great grandson (going on 4) helped me open it and has spent a lot of the day playing and conversing with it. He loves monarchs and helps during the season. The caterpillar will stay here and the grandies can enjoy it when visiting.

Once again – thank you.

Kindest regards. Janis Hibbert

BAD Days

Last year, during October, we held information events around the country to promote butterfly awareness. However, this year the trustees have decided not to have an official Butterfly Awareness Day, but are relooking at this for future years. If any members have any suggestions, we would love to hear them. Either leave a note in the forum, email trust@monarch.org.nz or the PO Box.

Coming Events

Just Gardening Show, Kumeu, 25 September, 9am-4pm

Charlotte will have a stall and welcomes any other members nearby to come along, have fun and help her.

There are prizes on offer for the day: A beautiful cake (Auckland Cake Art) value \$200 is first prize and second prize is a copy of 'The Lady of the Butterflies', kindly donated by Random NZ, \$39. All people who join up on the day will go into the draw to win.

There will also be a raffle with a first prize of two dozen Marziann Cupcakes (worth \$95), second prize a plant from Palmers, third prize a wooden Monarch butterfly for the garden fence (\$25). Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5. So let family and friends know to come and sign up to the MBNZT there. Charlotte will also have the sample calendar so be sure to take a look and place orders.

A few more helpers are needed. Or if you plan to go to the show, tickets are \$3 from Charlotte or \$5 on the day.

Tauranga Orchid Show, 24-26 September

This is a three-day display where Mary will be talking and giving out brochures.

Home Show, Rotorua, 29-31 October

Another three-day display where Mary and friends will be promoting butterflies.

Te Puna Quarry Park, QuarryFest, 7 November

Another display for Mary and Bay of Plenty members.

Growables, Nelson, 14 November

This is being organised by Chrissie Ward and other TOS members.

Blockhouse Bay Garden Festival, 20-21 November

Charlotte is co-ordinating this display. If you would like to be involved, you would be welcome. And what a great way to learn more about butterflies and your garden!

Charlotte: 09 832 7547 / Chrissie: 03 546 9818

Mary: 07 576 4752

Australian Migrants

October/November is traditionally when Australian migrant butterflies get blown across the Tasman and are seen in NZ. If anyone sees an unusual butterfly, a photograph, or a description with where/when logged in to mb.org.nz would be appreciated.

Madam Butterfly flits around the South Island

I had been invited to Christchurch to discuss the possibility of a website covering NZ's invertebrates. The opportunity to be in the South Island was great timing as various groups and clubs and schools had asked me to come down and talk with them about butterflies.

The meeting was very well organised and structured, and it was great to be able to share our experiences and learn more about what others were doing. Did you know that there is a database of NZ plants, and that the Monarch Butterfly Trust is not the only one counting insects?

Landcare also have some excellent information sheets on several interesting insects – a great resource for schools.

The meeting was one day only – and the next I was travelling north to Blenheim. This was my first time for many years of travelling by coach, and I can highly recommend it. The coaches are very well appointed, the drivers provide commentary on where you're going and what you see, and this is the first time for a long time I've not been driving as I flit around our country.

I was due at a retirement home. However, technology let me down here and I didn't have the support of my PowerPoint with slides of overwintering Monarchs and photographs of all our butterflies, so we had an impromptu quiz – men vs women – which was loads of fun. Thinking up questions about butterflies on my feet was quite an ordeal!

The next morning I spoke at Blenheim Central Primary School which I could tell the children enjoyed, especially when I dressed one of their teachers up as a butterfly. Then the coach whisked me away to Nelson.

Here I was home-hosted by Kath Widdowson, member who lives in Richmond, on the southern side of Nelson. Thanks to Chrissie Ward and Kath I was able to catch up with many people in the Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust – as well as getting an update on the latest pest to arrive in NZ.

Rae, one of our members some months ago found 'strange caterpillars' in her brother's garden and reported this to the authorities. The caterpillars have since been identified

as those of the Large White Butterfly *Pieris brassicae* (a relative of our Cabbage White, *P. rapae*) which some say COULD decimate brassica crops if it gets a hold on the country. (Other colleagues in the UK say it won't be much more of a pest than the Cabbage White – and there is no way of exterminating either butterfly as there is so much wild brassicae on roadside verges, parks etc.)

I have since found a copy of the NZ Entomologist, 1961, where the butterflies were noticed on mountains at Arthurs Pass, up to 5000 feet altitude. The reporter, C J Burrows,

stated that dead individuals of the species were seen on firm snow at altitudes up to 7000-8000 feet at Mt Cook and in nearby mountains.

(An amusing note: someone in the government has decided that *P. brassicae* should be called the 'Great White', not 'Large White' as it's known elsewhere in the world. So that's how it's officially named here, now. Perhaps they were imagining a man-eater?)

The next day I spoke to pupils at Clifton Terrace School, great environmental

awareness there! A wonderful little school and very enthusiastic about doing what they can to look after the environment.

Later in the day we (Chrissie, Kath and I) called on Richmond Plains vineyards to learn more about the biodynamic production of wine... oh, and sampled their fine products too. It was great to finally meet Lars Jensen as he is a great supporter of the MBNZT.

Nelson to Blenheim and back to Christchurch the next day. Christchurch to Queenstown the following day. Early starts, but wonderful scenery made it so worthwhile.

I got off the coach in the Gibbston Valley, near a huge sculpture of a voluptuous woman.

My kind hosts are both amazing cooks and knowledgeable about food and wine. Their beautiful home and B&B is on the edge of the vineyards. Grahame has been a household name for various reasons, can you guess from his email address, xabxmp@xtra.co.nz? Now he's got a reputation for his wonderful cooking. If you're heading that way, Grahame & Briony's B&B is highly recommended –



Photograph courtesy of the Nelson Mail – Jacqui with teacher Dean Schneider and one of the children at Clifton Terrace School



look for it on the internet: www.vintnersfolly.co.nz. You won't regret it!

On the coach again, Queenstown to Dunedin, and time to meet more members, thanks to Jennifer, our southern-most member. This was another small group but great to share ideas and information as to how to help our butterflies.

Before the meeting Jennifer and I drove out to Brighton, just south of Dunedin, where one of her tagged butterflies had ended up. There was so much forest out there, it is not hard to imagine overwintering places. If only we could train everyone in NZ to walk around the country (in the winter, of course) looking upwards!

Jennifer had been featured in the Otago Daily Times. She told me that one of the women who had contacted her is in a retirement village in Mosgiel and she kept one of her hatchling butterflies because there had been a great interest from other residents.

Small world! She also knew one of our taggers from East Taieri, Shona. Shona thought that when the weather was opportune she would release butterflies at the retirement village as interest for the residents.

There was discussion about encouraging more people in the retirement village to plant swan plants; some already did and jealously guard the caterpillars from the predations of their neighbours! Caterpillar Wars sounds like a good theme and title for a movie!

At the end of ten days I was homeward bound again, having enjoyed myself immensely, thanks to my various home hosts and the coach rides. But I wasn't sad to be out of that cool weather down there!

Jacqui

The Great 'Large White Butterfly' Update

You will have read in our Winter 2010 newsletter about the discovery of Large White larvae in the Nelson area.

The latest news is that Rae Herd found a Large White butterfly in her house on 5 September.

She says it must have escaped when they originally found the caterpillars in May, in a patch of nasturtiums. "It has taken almost four months in the pupal stage to develop," she said. "It's perfection – very handsome, but I've handed it on to Biosecurity."

On 18 August, all known sites where the butterfly larvae had been found had been searched, and one pupa discovered.

"The searches were carried out at sites because finding and removing pupae is the only option we have for organism management at the moment, as pupae are not susceptible to insecticide sprays," said Bruce Philip, MAF Biosecurity NZ response manager.

Draft eradication plans have been put together and include ground spraying of caterpillars, setting up bait stations around known or suspected sites and aerial spraying.

Certified butterfly garden/habitats

We are very excited about our Certified Butterfly Garden/Habitats – already this year we have had one application. This was a new initiative last year so that those with the ideal garden or habitat for butterflies and moths can be recognised.

Plaques were awarded to Te Puna Quarry Park, Verran Road School and West Lynn Garden, proclaiming for all to see that their property is what it is: ideal habitat for selected species of butterflies and moths.

"In that way we believe that other people – gardeners and land-owners – will be encouraged to create more butterfly habitat, or to visit certified areas to see how they can make their own space more attractive," said a representative of the trustees.

"There are some wonderful species of butterflies and moths in NZ that any of us can encourage once we understand what they need."

Before applying for certification, gardens or habitats should meet the following criteria:

- they can be privately owned or public spaces, e.g. owned by council, landcare groups, schools etc;
- outdoor landscapes
- host plants for at least three different lepidoptera species;
- nectar plants for all seasons of the year;
- evergreen shelter trees of appropriate height on southern side of garden;
- water for puddling;
- signage on display (noticeboard, website, brochure or whatever) as to what plants were planted for what species (hosts) and/or nectar during what season of the year (to inspire and encourage others to keep a continuity of planting);
- predators and parasites to be discouraged by natural means;
- been established for two or three seasons, and be able to provide evidence such as photographs, references etc.

We encourage applicants to ensure their space had been planted up for more than one season; Planting for butterflies and/or moths needs ongoing commitment and perseverance. Similarly as the idea is to boost numbers of NZ's endemic and native species, indoor habitats with tropical species do not qualify.

If you have a butterfly garden or habitat (don't forget: moths too!) of which you are proud, and if you believe it meets the above criteria, please contact us by mail or email to trust@monarch.org.nz to find out the next steps.

Overwintering Monarchs

We have had some great reports (and photographs) over the winter of Monarchs overwintering in Christchurch, Nelson and Whakatane – but there must be more.

One of the most exciting contacts we had was from a couple who were visiting from England, and came across a great display in Whakatane, beside the river. The observation was even more special as Ian Hardy happened to be a Vice President of Butterfly Conservation in England, and the sighting made his visit to NZ so much more special. He wrote:

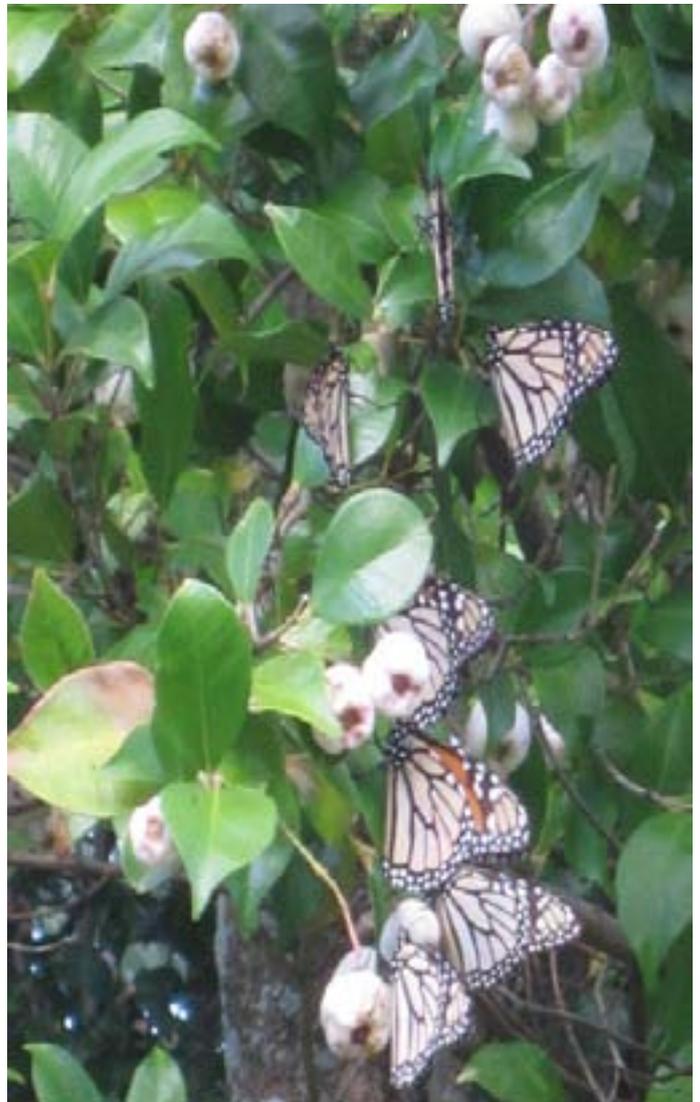
I have recently returned from three and a half weeks touring the North Island (what a stunning place!), and as a butterfly enthusiast I was keeping a lookout, despite it being your winter.

I had mentioned to my wife Sandra we might see a Monarch somewhere (most places we go in the world we usually see a Monarch!), and as usual since she's a much better 'spotter' than I am. She saw a Monarch floating by as we walked up the riverside track just out of Whakatane (on a nice warm sunny afternoon).

Looking back I confirmed the sighting, and then just round the corner we came across hundreds, feeding on some flowering bottlebrush, floating around, basking on the roost trees behind the shrubs, or just hanging there in small clumps. One male was even attempting (unsuccessfully) a mating on a ground-trapped female.

It was by far our best sighting since we were lucky enough a few years ago to see the wintering millions in the Mexican mountains.

Here are some of Ian's photographs.



Asclepias incarnata ('Ice Ballet')

Thanks to the generosity of a member we have a limited amount of *Asclepias incarnata* with the white flower available, \$5 a packet.

This is called 'Ice Ballet' and is an early and long-blooming milkweed. It has clear, bright white flowers and dark green foliage which make the colours of visiting butterflies glisten in the sunlight.

These seeds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Payment with order please.



One of the first Yellow Admirals this spring in a Whangarei garden enjoys the Freesias.

Burnished Brass Moth

I first saw these when I was staying in Rangiriri, not so far north of Hamilton. It was late afternoon and I was walking around the garden, admiring the colourful border with a huge variety of flowers. Then I saw something that glittered – a sparkling insect that reminded me of the tiny hummingbirds I'd seen in the USA.

At first I thought it was a butterfly, but knew that that couldn't be. It was hovering, just like a helicopter, over the flowers on which it was nectaring, squeezing right in between other branches and leaves. Rather than settling on the flower, it managed to stay alight with rapid wing strokes, hence the sparkle of the gold (or burnished brass!) from its wing pattern.

There were lots of them – but, sadly I was unable to get good photographs of them in action.

For many months I tried to find out what it was, and it wasn't until the conference in Tauranga that it was identified – Mary brought an adult from Te Puna Quarry Park, and also one of the looper caterpillars which had been eating her nettle.

Mary's nettle is a 'fiercely protected species' – only for the consumption of her Admirals. So this interloper (should that be interlooper?) is not popular here.

Thysanoplusia orichalcea is a medium-sized moth with a wingspan of 38mm. An introduced species, it was first discovered here in 1984, coming from West Africa and Australia. It is also found in southern England and in Europe. According to Landcare Research, the moth has the potential to become a significant pest in brassica and legume crops – and certainly in some gardens.

It is from the Noctuidae (owlet moth) family, robustly-built moths that includes more than 35,000 known species out of possibly a total of 100,000 and about 170 in NZ, three of which are on the Threatened Species list. They are the largest family in all Lepidoptera. The species inhabits gardens, waste ground and marshy areas and is also known as the Soybean looper (although technically not a looper, it is a semi-looper).

Last year the Anderson family of Taranaki had reported finding a Burnished Brass moth (www.mb.org.nz) having found a pupa in their garden and bringing it inside to see what was in it.

Jean remembers that "...after a few days it hatched and this beautiful moth came out, with amazing golden patches on its wings. We consulted our insect books and the internet and, after much searching, finally managed to identify it. There is a lot of information about butterflies around but not much on the less glamorous moths."

"The kids were quite taken by a moth that looked like it had gold leaf on its wings."

Then a few weeks ago, I received a dead specimen in the mail from a Waihi member; she wanted to know what this beautiful creature was.

Having seen them in real life, it was easy to identify it.

When is a looper not a looper and what is an inchworm?

By now my research had got me thinking... what is the difference between a looper, a semilooper – and are these 'inchworms', made famous in the delightful song sung by Danny Kaye in my childhood. I'm humming it here as I write:

Inchworm, inchworm
measuring the marigolds,
you and your arithmetic
you'll probably go far.

Inchworm, inchworm,
measuring the marigolds,
seems to me you'd stop and see
how beautiful they are

*Two and two are four
Four and four are eight
Eight and eight are sixteen
Sixteen and sixteen are thirty-two*

It seems the only true loopers are from the Geometridae family. The name is derived from the Latin 'geometer' or 'earth measurer', which refers to how the caterpillars move. Once again it is a very large family, with around 26,000 species of moths described worldwide and about 280 of them in NZ, most unique to this country and six of which are on the Threatened Species list.

They lack the prolegs that most caterpillars have in the middle of their body; they only have two or three pairs at each end. So the caterpillars clasp with their front legs, draw up the hind end and clasp with the hind prolegs to form an upturned 'U' shape.

Then they lift their front prolegs and reach out to move forward, creating the impression they're measuring their journey. Many of them, when disturbed, stand erect and motionless as though they are a horse, rearing.

The Burnished Brass moth has a full complement of prolegs – but moves in a similar fashion to the loopers, hence the name 'semi-looper'.

Jacqui



Sadly the gold does not show to best advantage in this photograph of the moth at rest

Book Review

I couldn't put **'Lady of the Butterflies'** (Random House) down. Written by Fiona Mountain and published in England last year, it tells the 17th Century story of Eleanor Glanville, one of the earliest entomologists, who lived at the time of James Petiver. Petiver was an apothecary, famed for his botanical and entomological collections which are now housed in the British Natural History Museum.

Eleanor grew up on the ancient marshlands of Somerset, her life marked by two reckless passions: a fascination with natural history (and butterflies in particular) and a tempestuous love affair with the dashing Richard Glanville.

No-one for sure knows how butterflies were formed. The study of insects was considered either lunacy or satanic in rural England in the late 1600s – and remember, in those days neither were women allowed to be pioneers. Eleanor (a real person, although much of the work is fiction) was entranced by butterflies all her life – and this tells her story with flair and passion. Her friendship with James Petiver inspired her, and gave her the courage and determination to continue with her study of butterflies,

The book is a great portrayal of Restoration England with ongoing tensions between Puritan and Cavalier, suspicion of Catholics and the draining of marshland which would destroy both habitat and peasants' livelihoods.

In the fenlands (fresh/salt water marshlands) peasants' homes would be flooded for a good part of the year – and during winter they could only inhabit the upper storey of

their cottages. However, they depended on this way of life, the rushes, sedges, eels and marsh-dwelling fish for survival. So a move to drain the fenlands and make them 'more productive' was horrific to them. These drained fenlands were one of the first habitats lost to butterflies – and today there is less than 3% of fenland still in existence.

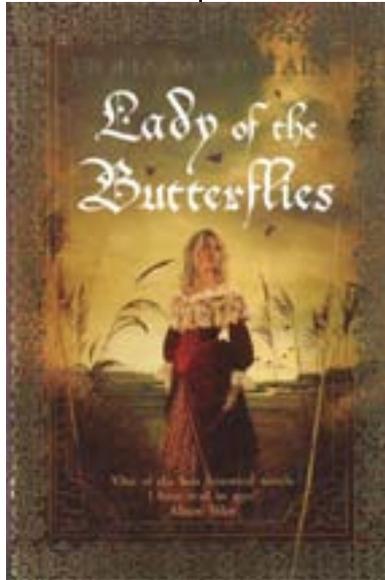
This destruction led to the first known butterfly extinction – that of the Large Copper, which was last seen in 1851.

The Swallowtail survives in Britain now only in the Norfolk Broads. Of Britain's butterflies today, 71% are now declining and 45% of species are threatened, mainly due to loss of habitat.

The Glanville Fritillary (named after Eleanor) is classified as rare but is still to be found on the Isle of Wight. I was, however, disappointed at the reference to the 'Admiral'. It was my understanding that when this butterfly was first named it was called the 'Admirable' because of its great beauty, and only in recent years has the name been changed because Admiral is easier to say. Is what I've read wrong, or did the author fail to pick this up in her research?

The loss of wetland floodplains (according to leading environmentalists) has also contributed to some of the devastating floods that have affected Britain over recent years. So as well as enjoying a great story, I learned a lot about the consequences of 'development' and the history of this era in England. It made me think!

Available from your favourite bookshop and most libraries.



Calendars

Our calendars are selling well, and we know that those who have ordered them are going to be thrilled. We have a prototype on the internet – and also at the displays (see 'Coming Events') that you can look at to decide if you want to miss out or not. (You won't!)

Orders close at the end of September, and please – payment with order, either in the mail (\$20 each, includes an envelope for you to mail them on to friends as Christmas gifts) or by internet banking. (Quote surname, postcode and 'calendar', and send an email confirming your payment to trust@monarch.org.nz.)

As well as giving you an enormous amount of pleasure, it's going to be a great way of raising funds for the MBNZT. Here's another look at one of the butterflies, each month features a different NZ butterfly or moth. And as a treat... a second photograph.



Conservation Week

This newsletter is being put together during Conservation Week; theme this year is 'Love New Zealand'. It's also the International Year of Biodiversity, a great opportunity to think about this important aspect of the environment.

What's happening, or happened, in your area? In Whangarei it's an exhibition of butterflies:

Discover the magic of New Zealand's native butterflies with this special exhibition. Find out about butterfly habitats and the distribution of butterflies in NZ, how and when Monarchs first arrived. Trace life cycles, find out what plants to grow to support butterflies and the difference between butterflies and moths.

The display culminates with free entry for everyone on Sunday 19 September – including a visit to the nocturnal kiwi house, bush walks, etc.

Conference

There have been a few inquiries about our conference but the 'organising committee' have had their hands full on other projects – so nothing much further to report.

Perhaps we will put a fully fledged conference on hold until the following year, but we hope to organise an informal gathering in Auckland late summer/early autumn. We will provide any further information in the next newsletter and on the website. If you are interested in getting involved, please email charlotte@monarch.org.nz or jacqui@monarch.org.nz, or phone 09 551 3383 (Jacqui).



Remember these?

Many houses in the 60s had these Monarch butterflies on exterior walls, and we think they may become popular again. Well, if you go to the Just Gardening Show at Kumeu, and find the MBNZT stall, you might just be lucky enough to win one.

Introduce a Friend

Here's an offer that we think will appeal to you.

We want to tell other New Zealanders how fragile our Lepidoptera species are – and how they can help – so we're encouraging you to invite a friend or friends to become a financial member.

Until the end of October, for each member that joins

Wing Repairs

Mona Miller, a keen Monarch supporter in the USA, wrote recently:

A friend had left a strange message for me. She said that she found a Monarch at the park with a broken wing and could I help her fix it. She said to call her at the hospital. What? She went to the hospital to get a butterfly wing fixed?

Well, no, she was visiting her stepson and wanted me to call right away. I arranged to meet her on Tuesday and told her to keep the butterfly quiet so she wouldn't break her wing further – place the Monarch in a dark, cool room.

A naturalist taught me to use the extra white and orange tags on our tagging kits to fix wings. They work well and don't weigh the butterfly down.

The butterfly had a problem with one of her upper wings in the middle on the edge. Over half the wing was beginning to break; almost like an elbow joint in that section. But, an elbow that doesn't bend.

I removed a tag from the sheet and put it on the wing – and the butterfly takes off! We capture her without further damage and apply a second tag. One tag on the top part of the wing and one on the bottom. The wing is fixed!

We go out to see if she can fly. She flies up into a tree and stayed there. We find my binoculars and she makes sure the Monarch and its wing are still okay.

The next day, I looked around for the Monarch with the two tags on its wing, but I can't see it.

Later in the afternoon a male carrying a female whizzes by.

Two other males are after him. They must want the female, too. He evades them with some incredible flying. The female hangs below and then I see it: the flash of orange and white tags.

It's her!

He carries her off. Later, he flies down with her and he is nectaring. During mating, he does give her nutrients. I note that she is balancing herself as he nectars, so the female isn't just being carried, she is also helping.

Wonder how long the wing fix will last with all that rough play?

we will give YOU one free packet of seed. Ask them to write your name on the bottom of the membership form, and choose which you would like:

Gomphocarpus physocarpus (giant swan plant)

Asclepias curassavica Scarlet (tropical milkweed)

Asclepias curassavica Gold (tropical milkweed)

Asclepias incarnata Pink (swamp milkweed)

Look after your Buddleias!

Cleopus japonicus is a snout beetle or weevil which was approved for release by ERMA as a biocontrol agent for buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) in NZ in November 2005. It has been brought in from China, and from September 2006 to April 2007 approximately 10,000 adults were produced, with multiple releases made at five experimental sites within the North Island.

Earlier this year Norm Twigge, in Whakatane, noticed the leaves on his Nanho Blue buddleia were looking like something was chewing at them, and later provided these photographs.

“Close inspection revealed an advanced infestation of maggot-like grubs on both sides of the leaves,” said Norm. “Putting two and two together I did a search and sure enough they proved to be *C. japonicus*.”

The insect is a weevil which lays its eggs on the leaves of buddleia bushes. These hatch out and grow into a maggot-like legless grub, a yellow jellylike blob which eats away at the leaves, defoliating the plant, stunting its growth, and probably eventually killing it. The grub will grow to about 5mm in length, and then pupates in a cocoon on the leaf, finally emerging as the adult weevil to mate and start all over again.

The authorities are more than happy with the results, and advised gardeners to spray their plants if the weevil became troublesome to ornamentals.

Norm waited until the last of the flowers had died back last season and then gave the Buddleia a good hard prune.

“Actually it was a massacre,” he said, “but Buddleias will withstand a hack back almost to within a foot of the ground and bounce back all the better the following spring.”

“This of course eliminated most of the weevil larvae and adults, although some had pupated and these overwinter and emerge about now, so a spraying is due before the shrub comes into flower.”

Norm tells us that the weevil is capable of flying so it will spread quite rapidly. He is not sure what to use as he detests most insecticides, but may try the seaweed foliar spray and see how that goes.

“Plus picking off and squishing any critters I see in the meantime,” he said, “although they have not appeared as yet.”

We have also had sightings of this insect in Clive, Hawkes Bay. We always appreciate reports of pests affecting any plants important to Lepidoptera:

<http://www.monarch.org.nz/monarch/projects/report-a-pest/>

