

# The Nectar News

Official Newsletter of the  
**Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association**

## SUMMER 2025

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July From an  
American Lady



### **Mission Statement:**

*It is our mission to share our knowledge to educate people about Lepidoptera and their habitats. To instill and foster a passion for nature in others. To establish and preserve the environment for butterflies, skippers, and moths.*

### **2025 Board Members:**

**President:** Joanne Schwab

**Vice President:** Burt Sloan

**Treasurer:** Rebecca Thomason

**Secretary:** Lisa Northey

**Membership Committee Chair:**

Cheryl Furlong

**Event Coordinator:**

Bill Beauregard

**SEMBA Email:**

[sembabutterfly@yahoo.com](mailto:sembabutterfly@yahoo.com)

**SEMBA Website:**

<https://www.sembabutterfly.org>

**SEMBA Facebook:** Southeast  
Michigan Butterfly Association

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### JULY 2025 GARDEN WALKS



Current and former SEMBA members, Brenda Sattler, Elmer Grimm and John Blair, have graciously opened their gardens for us to enjoy once again. If you haven't seen them, I encourage you to make a point of going, it's well worth it.

July 12<sup>th</sup> – Elmer's 10-4pm

July 12<sup>th</sup> – Brenda's 1-4pm

July 19<sup>th</sup> – John's 12:30pm

Limited to SEMBA members and a guest. If anyone is interested in showing their garden in 2026, please let a board member know.

### BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections for Board members will be held in September. If you are interested in running for a position on the board or would like to create a new position, please contact us at [sembabutterfly@yahoo.com](mailto:sembabutterfly@yahoo.com) by the August 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

### GARDEN GRANT RAFFLE



Examples of items to donate  
Sports memorabilia,  
beer/wine/liquor, books, garden  
items, new clothing, gift cards,  
plant seeds, gift baskets, etc.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



If you would like to volunteer at Barson's Butterfly House, please contact us and we will arrange a training time with you. Volunteer days and times, Wed. thru Sunday 10am – 2pm

### PHOTO CONTEST



Our gardens are starting to come alive! Flowers are blooming and butterflies are visiting so get your cameras out and start snapping those pictures and taking videos. We'd love to see and share your gardens. Submit your pictures to Bill [Billbeau10390@gmail.com](mailto:Billbeau10390@gmail.com) and we will put them on the website with your permission. Bill will make a slide presentation to show at the October meeting and members will vote on a winner.

### SEMBA/BARSON'S FUNDRAISER

There is still time to take advantage of the fundraiser. Barson's will donate 10% of our purchases to SEMBA. Flyers can be found on the SEMBA website.



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### SEMBA IN THE COMMUNITY

Our dedicated members have been busy this spring! Here are some of the events where SEMBA was represented. We're always looking to get members involved, so if you'd like to volunteer at an event, please reach out to a board member at a meeting or email us!

- March 1-2 WAM 38<sup>th</sup> annual Michigan Native Plant Conference
- April 12<sup>th</sup> Earth Day Monroe County Community College
- April 19<sup>th</sup> Romulus Eco Fair
- April 25-26<sup>th</sup> Goodells Earth Day Fair
- April 26<sup>th</sup> Earth Day Extravaganza at Nankin Mills Park
- May 30<sup>th</sup> River Raisin Plant Sale, RRWC HQ, Tecumseh
- **UPCOMING EVENT**  
July 19<sup>th</sup> Bugtopia at Nankin Mills 9-11am, come and visit the table

### Butterfly Houses & Gardens:

Looking for something to do this summer? Check out these butterfly houses, gardens, and events.

#### [Detroit Zoo Butterfly Garden](#)

Located in Royal Oak, this garden features a butterfly exhibit with various species among tropical plants. It is open year-round, and

admission is included with zoo entry.

#### [Matthaei Botanical Gardens](#)

Situated in Ann Arbor, this venue offers expansive indoor and outdoor gardens, including areas specifically designed to attract butterflies and other pollinators. They have a small section dedicated to teaching children about butterflies, bees, and flowers.

#### [For-Mar Butterfly House](#)

Located at [Genesee County Parks](#) This butterfly house is a sustainable habitat for Michigan native butterflies and their larvae. It's typically open Mid-May – Mid October during park hours.

#### [Ray Wiegand's Nursery](#)

Located in Macomb County, their Butterfly House features up to 12 species of native butterflies. Staff are available on certain days to guide visitors and provide insights into the butterfly lifecycle.

#### [Cranbrook House & Gardens](#)

Located in Bloomfield Hills, these gardens offer tours between May and October. While not solely focused on butterflies, their extensive gardens are likely to attract them.

#### [Rotary Club Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden](#)

This garden, located in Ann Arbor's [Gallup Park](#), is maintained by the Rotary Club and focuses on attracting butterflies and hummingbirds. [Sterling Heights Butterfly Conservatory](#) Situated within

#### [James C. Nelson Park](#)

This conservatory is home to native Michigan butterfly species. Guided walks are offered on certain days during the season (May-October).

#### [Butterflies of Detroit – The Detroit Parks Coalition](#)

<https://www.detroitparkscoalition.com/> has put together a booklet of the 24 most common butterflies found in Detroit and a map indicating the city parks that have established wildflower gardens. <https://www.detroitparkscoalition.com/impact/butterfliesofdetroit> **HAPPY BUTTERFLY WATCHING – WE'LL SEE YOU IN THE PARKS!**

### Specific Butterfly-related Events in 2025:

Rouge Park Butterfly & Native Prairie Walk: July 27, from 2-4pm 14600-15098 Outer Drive West  
Participate in a walk focusing on butterflies and native prairie plants in Rouge Park, Detroit.

*Sarett Nature Center in Benton Harbor on July 6 1-2:30pm The Mysterious Mitchell's Satyr: Michigan's rarest butterfly.*  
<https://www.sarett.org/>  
*Additional information as featured article in this edition.*





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**Bugtopia:** – at Nankin Mills, 33275 Edward Hines Drive, Westland. July 19<sup>th</sup> 9-11am  
The event will feature an insect safari, live bugs, bug crafts and games, inflatables, and a presentation by [Bees in the D](#).

**Birds, Blooms & Butterflies Festival:** This festival at the Dahlem Center in Jackson on August 9, 2025, celebrates the natural world and is likely to include butterfly-themed activities.

**Cheryl English Garden Tour:** The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Garden Tour. Cheryl was our January '25 guest speaker. August 9<sup>th</sup> 10am-2pm 3903 Grayton St. Detroit. See over 200 species of native plants—from seasonal forbs, grasses and ferns to native trees, shrubs and vines—in this unique Detroit garden.

### Article

#### Protecting Habitat for the Rare Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly: Michigan's Rarest Butterfly.



Flitting through the fens of southern Michigan and northern

Indiana is a chocolate-brown butterfly known as the Mitchell's satyr. [According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#), it is historically found at 30 sites across Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey and possibly Maryland. However, its numbers have since dwindled, making it one of the world's rarest butterflies.

Efforts are taking place across these states to protect this vanishing species. But why are conservationists focused on a butterfly with such a limited range? How does it impact the challenges facing our planet today? The answer is simple. Every species has an impact. This unassuming butterfly is a bellwether for the health of wetland habitats.



#### Facts About Mitchell's Satyr

- **Scientific Name:** *Neonympha mitchellii mitchellii*
- **Family:** Nymphalidae
- **Conservation Status:** Endangered
- **Habitat:** Prairie fen complexes
- **Lifecycle:** Adults live two to three weeks

#### What is the Mitchell's satyr butterfly?

A medium-sized butterfly, the Mitchell's satyr's wingspan ranges from 1.5 to 1.75 inches (3.8-4.4 cm). While its wings are primarily chocolate brown, a row of closely spaced, yellow-ringed black eyespots with a dot in the center differentiates them from other species. The wing's eye spots are encircled by two colorful orange bands.

Mitchell's satyrs are usually active for two to three weeks in June to July. During this time, they mate, lay eggs and die. Their eggs are laid on tiny flowers and fern seedlings growing close to the saturated peaty soil, under a dense canopy of sedges, where they stay for about a week before hatching into caterpillars. They remain at this stage throughout the year, hibernating under the snow during the winter and snacking on the sedges that dominate their habitat. As spring approaches, from late May to late June, they form a chrysalis and stay in that form for 10 to 15 days. At that time, they emerge and finally spread their wings.



Mitchell's Satyr



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Changes in its delicate wetland habitat have threatened the existence of the Mitchell's satyr, a species that is already very geographically restricted. © John Shuey/TNC

**What are the threats to the Mitchell's satyr?** Like [many species classified as threatened or endangered](#), habitat loss impacts the Mitchell's satyr population. The butterfly resides in a natural community known as a prairie fen—wetlands fed by groundwater and occurring in areas scoured by glaciers. Covered by grasses, sedges, rushes and wildflowers, healthy fens are an abundant food source for the species. The butterflies are also occasionally found in the natural communities associated with prairie fens—like tamarack swamps and sedge meadows.

### Species Range

[The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that the species range](#) is now limited to nine sites in southern Michigan, one in Indiana, a single county in Virginia, as well as small areas within both Mississippi and Alabama.

Unfortunately, prairie fens are disappearing. [These wetland complexes](#) are drained for agriculture or development. Nutrients and pesticides from adjacent farmland and home sites encourage invasive species encroachment into butterfly

habitat and stress insects in the fen. The wetland relies on natural landscape processes—like wildfires and flooding from beaver activity—to maintain a viable habitat for the Mitchell's satyr. Some of the sites where the species was once recorded are no longer considered viable habitats to support the butterfly's population due to issues with wetland health.

### Protecting and Restoring Prairie Fens

TNC uses a variety of land management tools to protect and restore prairie fens. The Mitchell's satyr thrives on plants found in this rare habitat. But over time, an abundance of invasive shrubs and trees began to crowd out native species. Restoration managers use both mechanical and chemical methods to remove unwanted species. They've also brought the regenerative power of fire back to the land.

Prairie fens rely on natural disturbances—such as fire—to help maintain the plant communities the Mitchell's satyr relies on. [Reintroducing fire at preserves](#), such as Grand River Fen, allows native plants like swamp milkweed and tuberous Indian plantain to rebound, helping the butterflies that feed on these plants.



**Prescribed Burn** Prairie fens are fire-dependent ecosystems, meaning the native plants and animals found there rely on fire in order to survive. © Kim Steinberger/TNC

### Help Protect the Fen

If you plan on visiting Grand River Fen Preserve, help protect this species and its habitat by staying on the designated path. Visit the preserve page to find information on the trail, parking and the other species you might encounter. [Visit Grand River Fen](#)

### A Bellwether for Wetland Health

Established in 1996 with a 131-acre purchase, [TNC's Grand River Fen Preserve](#) covers 453 acres of high-quality prairie fen and wetland communities.

Located in Jackson, Michigan, it is of high ecological significance and is a pivotal link to protect and restore a landscape mosaic of ecological systems. The preserve contains the second largest high-quality occurrence of cinquefoil-sedge fen in the North Central





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Tillplain Ecoregion, making it a critical habitat for special insects, including one of the largest populations of Mitchell's satyr in the world.



**Prairie Fen** A prairie fen is a rare type of wetland that receives water from cold, underground springs rich in minerals instead of from rainwater. The Grand River Fen Preserve, a TNC protected area in Southern Michigan, provides a high-quality habitat for a variety of species impacted by the loss of wetlands. © Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media



### What does the Mitchell's satyr eat?

The larvae eat a variety of sedges, so it's important their habitat is healthy and growing an abundance of native plants. The presence of this butterfly says a lot about the health of Grand River Fen. The Mitchell's satyr is a bellwether for the quality of a wetland. Changes to the

butterfly's population can indicate a change in the habitat. So why does this matter? Mitchell's satyr are [part of a larger ecosystem](#). Fens are full of a variety of plants and wildlife. The Grand River Fen is also home to other insects like the blazing star borer, tamarack tree cricket, pine tree cricket, regal fern borer, angular spittlebug and red-legged spittlebug. One globally-rare plant, the bog bluegrass, is also found here, as well as a very high diversity of flowering plants, sedges and grasses. Efforts to protect the Mitchell's satyr habitat have a ripple effect felt by all species living in the fen.

### Prairie Fen Species

When we protect prairie fens for the Mitchell satyr, we also protect them for snakes, turtles, insects and abundant plant life.



**Mitchell's Satyr Recovery Plan**  
TNC's Grand River Fen Preserve has one of the largest remaining populations of the endangered Mitchell's satyr in the Midwest—and our partners are helping it grow. Led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a consortium of federal officials, state wildlife agencies, land conservancies like TNC and zoos are leading the effort to recover the butterfly's population.



**Conservation in Action**  
**Relocating Mitchell's Satyr**  
In 2021, the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), [Washtenaw](#)





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[County Parks](#) and the [Michigan Natural Features Inventory](#) successfully relocated Mitchell's satyrs from TNC's Grand River Fen Preserve to Park Lyndon in Washtenaw County, to help expand its range. [Park Lyndon](#) was identified as a viable site for introducing the butterfly because its large, flourishing fen provided an ideal habitat for a new population.

Michigan is considered the best location to focus on recovery, given the number of sites where the butterfly is still active. However, some unknowns remain as to what attributes create the perfect Mitchell's satyr habitat.



### Conservation in Action Rearing Mitchell's Satyr

Captive propagation of Mitchell's satyr is one last-ditch solution to help populations, outside of Grand River Fen, recover. Wading through a fen to identify larvae is not a practical approach for rearing the species. At zoos, there is more control over the variables impacting the butterfly. That's why the [Toledo Zoo in Ohio](#) worked to breed Mitchell's

satyrs in captivity and learn more about their development.

Adults, sourced from the Grand River Fen Preserve's population, were bred in enclosures at the zoo under the watchful eye of researchers.

Moving forward, we're working with the [John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids](#) and [Kalamazoo Nature Center](#) to rear and release the butterfly in new, suitable sites across Michigan.

Throughout the rearing process, and with the assistance of the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, researchers have tested various plant species to determine the best host for the larvae.



### Conservation in Action Monitoring Mitchell's Satyr

In 2021, the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) worked with Michigan Natural Features Inventory and TNC to install monitoring equipment on the Grand River

Fen Preserve that provides new data on fen hydrology and local conditions. This will help inform restoration efforts and support a thriving Mitchell's satyr population.

**Milkweed Weevil – Killing several species of Milkweed, swamp, red and butterfly weed.**



Adults emerge in May and are nocturnal. They feed on the midvein of terminal leaves, causing the leaves to be distorted. They also eat a series of holes in the stems of swamp milkweed, into some of which they lay eggs. This damage to the stem causes the upper stem and leaves of the plant to wilt and break off. Hatching larvae create meandering tunnels through the pith, and numerous older larvae consume the entire pith. Mature larvae pupate in the pith with first generation adults emerging in mid-summer through round holes that they chew in the stems. Thanks, Bill, for sharing this information.





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## 2025 Calendar of Events

The most up-to-date information can be found on  
the SEMBA website

**January 16, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 6:30pm

*Cheryl English – Topic TBD*

**February 20, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 6:30pm

*Sarah Roland – Zebra Swallowtail*

**March 20, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 6:30pm  
*Elmer Grimm – Plant propagation and discussion  
on his garden*

**April 17, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 6:30pm  
*Mary Bird – Michigan Native Butterfly Farm*

**May 15, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 6:30pm

*Karen Menard of Metroparks Toledo –  
Butterfly monitoring transects using Ohio  
Leps protocol/Pollard Yates monitoring  
method*

**June 19, 2025**

At Barson's 6414 Merriman Rd. 6:30pm  
*Debbie Barson – Butterfly Habitat*  
**Zoom will not be offered for this meeting**

### JULY GARDEN WALKS

**Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

Elmer Grimm 10am – 4pm

Brenda Sattler 1pm - 4pm

**Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>**

John Blair, Brooklyn, MI 12:30pm

**August 21, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 7:00pm

*Brenda Sattler – The State of the Monarch*

**September 18, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 7:00pm

*Judy Semroc – Magnificent Moths*

**Remember to bring Butterfly Garden Grant  
Raffle items**

**October 16, 2025**

At Crosswalk Community Church, 7:00pm  
**Butterfly Garden Grant Raffle and Pot Luck**  
(formerly Teacup Raffle)

