

The Nectar News

Official Newsletter of the
Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association

SPRING 2025



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
SEMBA Website:
<https://www.sembabutterfly.org>
SEMBA Facebook: Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 SEMBA/BARSON'S FUNDRAISER

Our SEMBA angel Debbie Barson is generously offering us a fundraising opportunity. Barson's will donate 10% of our purchases to SEMBA.

How does it work?

Go to www.sembabutterfly.org and click on the SEMBA Fundraiser button, download and print the certificate. Present the certificate to the cashier BEFORE they ring you up, otherwise the sale won't be counted. The amount raised will be calculated at the end of the season and announced at the October meeting.



There are numerous Earth Day events taking place this year throughout SE Michigan. Joanne is working on ways for SEMBA to take part in these events. If you are interested in volunteering, please email her at schwabjoanne63@gmail.com Here are just a few.

Earth Day Expo – Monroe County Community College
Sat, 4/12/25 - 11am to 2pm
<https://www.co.monroe.mi.us/35/Earth-Day-Expo-2025>

Romulus Eco Fair – Romulus Athletic Center
Sat, 4/19 - 10am to 2pm
<https://happeningnext.com/event/eco-fair-earth-day-celebration-2025-eid3a0cab26td?ref=holidays>

Hayes Elementary Earth Day Event April 22 at 12:30 – See separate attachment for details

Earth Fair – Goodells Co Park (Largest Earth Day Event in MI)
Fri, 4/26/25 - 9am – 4pm
Sat, 4/27/25 - 10am – 4pm
<https://earthdayfair.com/>

NATIVE PLANT SALES

Register for a Free native plant kit - Oakland County Native Plant Kit Giveaway
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIOAKL/bulletins/39dfced>

Lake St. Clair Sustainable Saturdays Plant Swap
https://www.metroparks.com/sustainable_saturdays/

Plants for Ecology – Troy
<https://www.plantsforecology.com/>

Clinton River Watershed Council Spring Sale
Pre-orders due May 2nd
<https://www.crw.org/events/native-plant-sale>

Cranbrook House and Garden Plant Sale
Fri, May 16 10am – 5pm
Sat, May 17 10am – 2pm
<https://housegardens.cranbrook.edu/events/spring-plant-sale>



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**Huron-Clinton Metroparks
Native Plant Sale**
Sat, May 17th - 10am – 4pm
Sat, May 24th – 9am – 3pm
[Huron-Clinton, MI - Event
Calendar](#)

Friends of Rouge Spring Sale
Sat, May 17th 10am – 2pm
<https://therouge.org/store/>

**River Raisin Native Plant Sale
and Pollinator Garden Tour**
Fri, May 30th from 2pm – 7pm
<https://allevents.in/tecumseh/river-raisin-native-plant-sale/200027889309507>

**Washtenaw County
Conservation District – Native
Plant Expo and Marketplace**
Sat, 6/7/25 9am to 1pm. Early
Bird 8-9am - tickets required \$5
<https://washtenawcd.org/native-plant-expo>

**MSU Tollgate Farms Spring
Native Plant Sale**
Sat June 7th from 9am – 2pm
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/tollgate-spring-plant-sale>

MORE THINGS TO DO

**PENN Theatre – Plymouth
Pollinators: Unsung Heroes of
our Human Existence**

Film: Every Little Thing

**Featured Speaker:
Carly Cirilli, co-founder of
Plymouth Pollinators**

Sat 6/14 7pm Free admission
<https://penntheatre.com/science.html>

**3B's Community
Appreciation Day**
8500 Flamingo Blvd,
Westland, 48185
Sat, June 28th 11am – 1pm

Articles



EXCITING NEWS FROM Monarch Joint Venture:

Journey North is Migrating to Monarch Joint Venture

“As we look toward spring and the arrival of cherished seasonal events such as migration and spring blooms, we are pleased to announce the Journey North will move from UW-Madison Arboretum to Monarch Joint Venture. This transition marks an exciting new chapter for Journey North as it finds its new home with MJV. It presents a valuable opportunity to ensure the program’s long-term sustainability and growth. Under the MJV’s stewardship Journey North will continue to thrive, engaging citizen scientists and inspiring vital conservation efforts for monarchs, pollinators, and the ecosystems they support.”

“Welcoming Journey North into MJV strengthens our ability to support conservation through education and citizen science. This program’s long-standing impact aligns seamlessly with

our mission, and we’re excited to build on its legacy as part of our organization, says Wendy Caldwell, executive director of MJV.”

-UW-Madison Arboretum, Journey North, The Monarch Joint Venture

**Alarming data: Butterflies are
disappearing quickly – Huge
study shows declines across
hundreds of species.**

By **Keith Matheny** – Detroit Free Press

Butterfly abundance in the continental United States has crashed some 22% in only 20 years across 554 species counted, an alarming new scientific study involving Michigan State University found. Declines in some butterfly species have been understood — the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service just reopened public comments on a proposal to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Habitat loss, climate change and the use of certain pesticides and herbicides are suspected causes for the declines. But the new research, published this month in the peer-reviewed journal Science, looked at butterfly data from more than 76,000 citizen science surveys across the country and showed a far more widespread problem. Collin Edwards, a postdoctoral researcher at Washington State University and one of the leads on the study, called the declines



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“really depressing.” “A 22% decrease in total numbers of butterflies — and the story looks a lot worse when you look on a species-by-species basis,” he said. Bringing together 35 butterfly surveys “The part that really surprised me was the breadth and consistency of declines. Some regions are doing worse than others for sure, but every region had more declining species than growing species. There wasn’t a group of butterflies, a butterfly family or butterflies with a specific trait that were doing OK.” The research, over a four-year period, tapped into robust datasets from citizen scientist butterfly counts, big and small, across the country. Nick Haddad, an ecology professor at Michigan State University, worked on the research, along with MSU colleague Elise Zipkin, director of MSU’s Ecology, Evolution and Behavior program. “There are about 35 decadeslong butterfly monitoring programs across the U.S., but they are done independently by different organizations,” Haddad said. “And we realized, man, this is a resource that we can bring together to understand what is happening to all butterflies.” A big challenge was pulling that data together and then figuring out how to work with it in a way that accounted for the differences between datasets,

Edwards said. “How do we get all of the data together in a way that makes sense given that, say, the North American Butterfly Association has a completely different survey method than the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network?” While the new research focused solely on synthesizing the data and observing trends, related recent research using the same data has looked at causes for the butterfly declines. The same three trends emerge, Edwards said: habitat loss, climate change and pesticides. Haddad said research by himself and others at Michigan State found declining butterfly numbers correlate closely with the introduction of a class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids in the region’s corn and soy crops. “They can directly kill insects, but it’s broader than that,” he said. “They can affect insect behavior so their feeding becomes more erratic, and they can have lower growth rates and survival, affecting population sizes over time.” Why butterflies matter Butterflies are more than just a pretty bug. Like honeybees — another important insect experiencing population declines for the same reasons — butterflies are important pollinators of plants, including agricultural crops. A 2021 study coauthored by Haddad found that butterflies and hoverflies

contributed significantly to cotton crops in Texas, an economic benefit worth about \$120 million per year to just the Texas cotton industry alone. “So if you then scale that to all the continent and all the world, who knows what the value is?” he said. “Butterflies pollinate certain plants in certain places at certain times of day and certain times of year when other pollinators are not there.” Butterflies, particularly in their caterpillar stage, are also important food for other species, including birds. Research showing North American bird populations down 2.9 billion breeding adult birds since 1970 could have a connection to insect declines, Haddad said. “For sure, we know birds do better when their insect prey is more abundant,” he said. Because their unique, colorful wings make butterflies more easily spotted and individual species readily identifiable, they can be surveyed in ways that would be impossible with other insects, Edwards said. For that reason, ecologists can use butterflies as a “canary in the coal mine,” showing declines that are likely occurring with bees and other insect species for the same reasons, he said. What can be done to help declining butterfly numbers? Both Edwards and Haddad said eliminating the use of pesticides in agriculture is



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unlikely, but reductions in usage and stricter targeting of where pesticides are used would likely help. People can plant pollinator gardens in their yards to provide precious habitats for butterflies, including milkweed plants coveted by monarch butterflies. And both researchers urged people to participate in local butterfly counts. In Michigan, the Kalamazoo Nature Center participates in the annual North American Butterfly Association count, and offers butterfly monitor training. For more information, go to naturecenter.org and search "butterfly." "This study really relied on hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours of people going out and looking for butterflies," Edwards said. "Anyone who is interested in this sort of thing, you can find local programs." Edwards noted that the group's butterfly decline research was funded almost entirely by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — two federal agencies whose budgets are "currently kind of being gutted" under significant cuts by the new Trump administration. "It sure looks like if we were to want to start this project this year, we would not have been able to, because there would not have been the funding or support for it," he said. Haddad published a book in 2019 titled, "The Last

Butterflies: A Scientist's Quest to Save a Rare and Vanishing Creature." "That book was about the eight rarest butterflies in the world," he said. "The title sounded super-alarmist. Now I realize the title wasn't alarmist enough. It's not just about these eight rare species; it's about all butterflies." Contact Keith Matheny: kmatheny@freepress.com.

NABA reports that scientists reveal that one in five butterflies have vanished.

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) shared a study revealing a 22% decline in butterfly populations across America over the past 20 years, with one in five butterflies vanishing. The study highlights habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change as primary drivers of the decline. NABA contributed significant data to the study and encourages individuals to help by building butterfly gardens and reducing pesticide use

How US butterfly populations changed by region, 2000-2020

A review of more than 76,000 surveys from across the contiguous U.S. found butterfly populations fell in almost every region from 2000 to 2020, and in almost every species.



Chart: The Conversation, CC BY-ND - Source: Colin Edwards, et al., Science 2023 - Created with Datawrapper

Study in the journal *Science*

The Egg Hunt-Look there's an Egg! By Joanne Schwab



Are you that person who stops at the side of the road to check out the milkweed for Monarch eggs or caterpillars? Then this article is for you. CAUTION-, DO NOT pull over on any highways. Let's start with one of my favorite butterflies. Most human beings that are breathing know about Monarchs. I believe this is the most discussed butterfly by researchers and the public. It is what I first focused on in my butterfly journey. Monarchs are a type of brush-footed butterfly. They have small impractical prolegs that are, of course, hairy.

When I say MONARCH, you say MILKWEED! I think this is the most universally known insect-plant interaction. Yes, the ONLY thing Monarch caterpillars eat is Milkweed. I personally think that Monarchs like to lay eggs on any new young growth usually on the underside of leaves. But she will lay her eggs just about anywhere, like on buds, top of leaves, stalks...



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and many times, on the brand-new sprouted seedlings.



I lay down on the ground and look up at the underside of leaves. At dusk and dawn seems to be the best time to see eggs and cats the best.

I find that the first instar of Monarch cats is harder to find than eggs. They are tiny. What I look for is “caterpillar chew signs”.



This is the tell-tale sign that a caterpillar is or has been there. Only 5% of caterpillars survive to the butterfly stage.

Later instars seem to suddenly show up in July and August. I usually start seeing Monarchs by the 4th of July, here in Southeast Michigan. I have in my records of finding eggs as early as May 15th. I have also seen first sightings of Monarchs as late as the end of July.

The Monarchs eclosing in August/September are the “SUPER MONARCHS”. The ones that fly down to Mexico where they over winter on Oyamel Pine trees in El Rosario, Mexico.



The Monarch count was up in 2024-2025 to 1.79 hectares. The previous count was 0.9 hectares! All of us planting Milkweed and not using pesticides has increased the Monarch population. Thank you for your help increasing the Monarch population!

IN OTHER NEWS

Did you Know! That SEMBA will certify your garden as a native butterfly garden? You can choose from a paper certificate with your name on it or a yard sign, or both!



Please use the link below <https://www.sembabutterfly.org/calendars> to access the requirements and certification application.

Are you up to date with your SEMBA dues? If you have not yet paid your dues, please go to the membership page on the SEMBA website <https://www.sembabutterfly.org/membership> and you can pay using the pay now button. Thank you in advance for your payment!

SEMBA BADGES

If you would like a SEMBA badge with your name on it, please let Cheryl Furlong know at the next meeting. Also, we have SEMBA lanyards available for sale for \$5 at every meeting.





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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 transect 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 12th

Elmer Grimm 10am – 4pm

Brenda Sattler 1pm - 4pm

Saturday, July 19th

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 Tea Cup Raffle)***

