

A Summer Riddle

What does a car boot, a sweater, gumboots, a clothes peg and a vase all have in common?
Give up?

They have all become favoured spots of caterpillars wanting to turn into a chrysalis! These photographs have all been submitted to the MBNZT from members

Vicky discovered the Admiral pupa on her sweater only when the woman at the supermarket checkout told her about it. Jacqui lost a large caterpillar on return from a school visit - and next time she opened the boot of her car, hey presto! No missing caterpillar but a beautiful pupa in the back window.



The Monarch emerged safely from the vase and was released at Te Puna Quarry Park.

The T-shirt was left on the clothesline as the Monarch had woven a very tangled network of 'hold downs' to ensure it would be safe. But after the appropriate time, it too emerged safely.

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Butterflies in Hawera School

The Endeavour Centre at Hawera High School teaches a group of disabled pupils, all with special needs. The intention of establishing what will be called 'The Monarchs' within the Endeavour Centre has given this group the opportunity to excel by creating a special educational programme to study the Monarch butterfly, with the express aim of increasing the butterfly numbers in New Zealand.

With the guidance of the Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust, the students will be able to create an environmental situation that will encourage an extensive breeding habitat for the butterflies.

Hundreds of swan and milkweed plants (the main food source and breeding environment for the butterfly) are being grown by the students and then planted out with the established 'Natural Heritage Planting' area on the Fonterra Farm situated nearby.

The project incorporates the Endeavour Centre ideals, being a worthwhile and educational project that suits the needs for this group. It is encouraging the students to achieve in a situation that will create an environment that benefits the community and helps a species of animal that has a special meaning to New Zealanders.

It is a project of great purpose and that in itself will give credible recognition to students that quite often are not able to excel in a particular subject or a task.

The project is supported by the local Rotary Club who have underwritten the costs.

Fonterra has donated timber and the Hawera High School Tech Department has built a shadehouse outside the Endeavour Centre. Local schools (such as Mokoia, pictured) are visiting and getting involved.



A Service Project

Room 8 at Maeroa Intermediate School in Hamilton wanted to encourage people in their school community to appreciate the environment.

"We decided to grow swan plants to give away to families, so they would be able to enjoy watching the Monarch butterflies life cycle," said Julie Yeoman, their teacher.

They were given about twenty swan plant seed pods and when the pods were opened they found hundreds of seeds. Bags of seed-raising mix were donated along with several seed trays and when the seeds were planted, the children kept them in their class link room where it was 'nice and warm, and very sunny'.

"It took about four weeks for the seeds to germinate and we have to admit we were wondering if we had over-watered them and caused the seeds to rot. When the tiny seedlings were about 4cm we transplanted them into larger containers. This took hundreds of planting bags and 16 large bags of potting mix. It took us nearly three weeks to transplant them."

"Our link room quickly became too small so we took over the benches in another room."

"There were too many plants to count exactly but we estimated we had close to 600. When winter frosts had disappeared we took the plants to the swimming pool area where they continued to grow."

"When the plants were close to 50cm in height we advertised "free swan plants" in the school newsletter and were really impressed with the response.

They have now been given away to families of our school community and the plants now have many eggs, caterpillars or even chrysalises. We can't wait until the butterflies have hatched and are flying around our school and community."

Well done Room 8 at Maeroa Intermediate!



West Lynn Garden, Auckland

Did you know there is a Monarch Butterfly House in Parker Ave, New Lynn? From December through to April hundreds of Monarch butterflies can be seen. School parties, family groups and individuals love walking among them, and learning all about metamorphosis and how the butterflies feed or 'nectar' first-hand. *See photo above.*

The conservatory is open from 10am to 4pm daily and it's only \$2 entry – including the gardens. The gardens are a delight – some 2.5ha of park-like surroundings featuring native and exotic plants and flowers.

West Lynn Garden was established by the Eden Garden Society in 1981 and developed along similar lines as its counterpart by hardworking voluntary garden enthusiasts. Some ten years later the West Lynn Garden Society was formed and a committee of local enthusiasts was elected.

The Butterfly House has just received the Totara Award from Keep Waitakere Beautiful Trust for its volunteers. The society is always looking for more, so if you are looking for a school project, or if you are unable to keep butterflies at home, why not get in touch with Margaret Jamieson, President, on 09 827 7045.

The Matakana Project, North Auckland

Rob Herd and his wife are involved with the Matakana Country Park, and are developing a butterfly house. The park's owner has given them a portable shed, 11 metres long and 2.5 metres wide, with raised floor and the Herds are converting it into a butterfly house for NZ butterflies.

They are looking for recycled materials – so if you live in the area, or have friends who are nearby, you may like to get in touch with Rob – such things as doors, clear lights, netting, security, planters and plants etc.

"This is interesting and exciting," Rob said.

They have built a separate propagation shed for swan plants and have started propagation various nectar plants.

"We hope also to get the Common Copper and Common Blue in there," he said. "But the biggest test will be the ability to maintain these separate populations of butterflies, especially at such an early stage. We are both looking forward to the developments and hope to make this project both interesting and informative to the general public and for the Matakana Country Park."

Your Summer Garden

Last newsletter Vicky and Gilly were generous with tips to help with the garden. This month it is a matter of keeping that same philosophy in practice.

Remember that butterflies can sense their host plant from a long way away. For instance, a female Monarch will be able to smell it from as far away as 2 kilometres. With her forelegs she tests the leaf to check it out for quality - and then gets busy egg-laying.

If you have too many eggs laid on the plant, you will soon run out of food. You can never have enough milkweed. Besides swan plant, you can buy these three other varieties directly from the MBNZT, at \$5 a packet.

Gomphocarpus physocarpus, the Giant swan plant is a vigorous grower, bigger and lasting longer than ordinary swan plant. 25-50 seeds per packet. Tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*): comes in two 'colours' – Silky Scarlet or Silky Gold. Specify which one when ordering.

Yates now donate a percentage of proceeds from sales of their swan plant seed to the MBNZT too, so look out for their seed displays.

Keep smaller plants covered and away from Mrs Monarch. Some people 'rub' eggs off the leaves to limit the population – but if you hide your plants, she will go and lay elsewhere. Remember it is one egg in every thousand that will make it to adulthood – for a wide range of reasons.

Your plants will also be loved by snails, slugs and aphids. Look for organic methods of controlling these, such as encouraging birds and ladybirds into your garden. Remember pesticides reduce the number of butterflies. There are a wide range of ways of problem solving with your butterfly garden, so we suggest you post a plea for help in the forum, www.monarch.org.nz/forum.

Having no milkweed in my garden, I successfully raised and released about 50-100 caterpillars on a noxious weed, *Araujia sericifera*. Now I definitely do not condone planting or harbouring this plant – but if you have caterpillars that would otherwise starve, either pick leaves and bring them home OR take your caterpillars (even the tiniest ones) to the weed and let them go through their life cycle.

Don't forget if you have too much green leaf you can freeze the new shoots. Store freshly-picked leaves in ziplock bags in the freezer. When removed, it dries out quickly, so it is important to provide freshly-thawed leaves frequently.

When buying plants from a garden centre, make sure you wash them thoroughly first in case there is any spray present. Pinch out the middle of the plant and give the plants a chance to bush out. Although 'full sun' may benefit the plant, it can be tough for your caterpillars.

Planting under the eaves is good providing shelter and also to help plants survive the winter, especially if you live in a frost-prone area.

Use natural fertilisers and avoid anything that has had hormones added – these can affect your caterpillars. Milkweed does not like to have wet feet but remember to water plants regularly – toxins intensify in plants that dry out, affecting your caterpillars too.



Tokoroa A&P Show

According to those who attended, the stand at the Tokoroa A&P Show was a great success. The site was right next to a door – with the entrance opposite the stand. Prime position!

Stu, who organised the event, said it started out slowly but picked up after the Christmas Parade finished.

The three of us (which included Mary, who had driven over from Tauranga for the event) managed to field everyone's questions and after speaking with a couple of hundred people the recurring theme was 'we did this as kids but...'.
So the team did their best to convince them to keep the tradition going.

Mary arrived about 9am with butterflies and caterpillars. We had a release of butterflies about midday to the amazement of the crowd. The other half of the butterflies were released at Stu's home, around nectar plants and milkweed, after the show.

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Seeds were a hot item.

"If I had plants to sell then they would have been the big winner," Stu said. "We gave out about fifty membership forms and also invited people to become part of a local network."

Stu was invited to have a stand at the Putaruru A&P Show, which takes place in February.

Well done Stu and team, shown above.

Cornwall Park, Auckland

For the last month there has been a display about NZ's butterflies at Huia Lodge, the information centre within Cornwall Park (None Tree Hill, Auckland).

The display was put together on the morning of Saturday, 15 November with help of a willing team of Auckland members – and a great contribution from Information Centre staff. Angela Gibbons contributed a display case of stinging nettles and Admiral caterpillars and Beverley Sinclair and Angela also brought in swan plants and Monarch caterpillars and pupae.

It could not have happened without everyone's efforts – thank you all.

On the final weekend (preparations being made as this newsletter is put to press) Jacqui is speaking at a public meeting and will answer questions. We hope that we can encourage more butterfly gardeners and new members as well.

The venue was excellent – we hope that we can reproduce the exhibit again in future years.

*I started as a tiny egg
upon a leaf of green
and now I stay upon the leaf,
so that I won't be seen.
Soon I'll build a chrysalis
upon a leaf up high
I'll stay a while
and then come out,
and be a butterfly.*

Bring Back the Butterflies

Tauranga, Easter 2009

Saturday, 11 & Sunday, 12 April - Bureta Park

Conference of the
Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust

Bring winged beauty into your garden!

Keynote Speakers

- Dr Barrie Frost, Canada,
- Dr George Gibbs, Wellington
- Dr Robert Hoare, Auckland
and more...

Prices

Earlybird Closed
Full registration:
1 December-31 January - \$150
Late registration:
1 February onwards - \$180

More Information & Programme:

Write: MBNZT, C/- NZ Post, Russell
Ph. 07 576 4752 or 09 403 8543
Email jacqui@monarch.org.nz
or mary@monarch.org.nz

Teachers, gardeners, parents...
this event is for you.

EVERYBODY WELCOME

The Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust thanks the following for their support in bringing this event to you:



Greenwood Trust



Conference 2009

You will want to be at the 2009 MBNZT Conference, Tauranga, 11-12 April (Easter). The excitement is building! We've just had confirmation from our speakers as to the content of some of the workshops. One thing is common – the workshops are all about learning practical skills and having fun while we do it.

Photography: As the quality of digital cameras increases, and the cost gets lower, Nature photography is quickly becoming one of the fastest growing hobbies. This means more and more people are out there, appreciating nature through the lens of a camera. It's a fascinating and fun way to explore and to see the world from new and exciting perspectives.

The Photography Workshop will focus on how to work with light, making fine art in nature, action photography of butterflies, moths and other insects, the art of getting closer to your subjects, and the secret to those award-winning shots – PATIENCE!

Moths: New Zealand has over 1500 species of moths – some still to be discovered and identified – and on the Saturday night we will be undertaking some light-trapping to see what we can find at Te Puna Quarry Park.

While we tend to think of moths as a boring insect which attacks our food and clothing, some moths are quite stunningly beautiful. It will be fun to learn more about them, their differences and what makes them tick.

Taking Cuttings: Many garden plants can be grown from cuttings, and we will learn lots of tips so that you can double or treble the number of plants in your garden – without costing the earth.

Jo Dawkins was a Regional Finalist in the Gardener of the Year Contest. With a background in floristry and horticulture, like her sister Mary, Jo is a volunteer at the Te Puna Quarry Park garden.

Tagging: “But how can you tag a butterfly – won't it hurt it? A question often asked by those who would like to get involved in measuring NZ's Monarch population but have always been too afraid to try. Jacqui Knight is an experienced tagger, and you will be able to try tagging your own Monarch and then go home armed with tags and all you need to know to work in your own backyard.

Raising Admirals at home: Norm Twigge has been doing this for years, and is going to show us shortcuts working with nettle, and how to raise these attractive little NZ butterflies. Norm won't be satisfied until he finds them in every corner of NZ - won't that be a thrill for all of us?

Pest Control: What is a pest? What 'good' are they? You can call it 'organic gardening' but at this workshop you'll learn more about gardening naturally and not to see pests

and parasites as ogres but something that occurs naturally and just needs to be kept in the right place. When we're all gardening naturally, the world will be a much healthier place.

How to Design a Butterfly Garden: There are many things you can do in your garden to attract more butterflies - the right plants in the right place with the right shelter and right attitude. And you'll learn it all here!

Environmental Education Workshops: Lots of things for families to do - or school classes, play centre, clubs, school holiday programmes. Ideas for all ages – educational AND they're great fun.

PLUS: Be among the first in NZ to find out about the Monarch Teacher Network, the latest in environmental education from the USA.

PLUS: Hear George Gibbs, who knows more about NZ's butterflies than probably everyone else put together.

PLUS: Barrie Frost, from Ontario University, will talk about how the Monarch finds its way - whether it is in North America (where they fly from Canada to Mexico) or in NZ where it travels to warmer climes for the winter.

PLUS: Mark Hauber will tell us what the last two years of tagging Monarchs in NZ has taught us - and what we will learn from future tagging operations.

PLUS: Hear of the wonderful educational initiative from the Monarch Teacher Network which began in the USA and is spreading like wildfire to Canada, Peru and now NZ.

Be in quick! See you there.



Photo: Gill Jackson

Aphids? Wasps?

If you are having problems with these two pests (the aphids affect your milkweed, the wasps are the major pest of caterpillars) send an email to trust@monarch.org.nz and we will send you the Fact Sheet with lots of tips on how to control these pests.

The documents are a work in progress so if you would like to add your tips, please let us know.

Notice of Annual General Meeting
of the Monarch Butterfly New Zealand Trust
9.30pm Sunday, 12 April 2009
Bureta Park, Tauranga

Agenda:

Apologies –

- (a) Chairperson's Report
- (b) Statement of Accounts for 2007-2008
- (c) Auditor's Report
- (d) Budget for 2008-2009
- (e) Elections of Members of the Board
- (f) Election of a Chairperson
- (g) Election of Secretary/Treasurer
- (h) Changes to Trust Deed (see below)
- (i) Fix annual subscriptions for 2009-2010.
- (j) General Business

The meeting will also be held on line, so for those of you who can't be in Tauranga, have a computer and a broadband internet connection, but want to be involved, – for further information, contact jacqui@monarch.org.nz.

Changes to Trust Deed

The following changes have been proposed to our Trust Deed. The original Trust Deed can be found on our website – or email trust@monarch.org.nz for a copy.

11.2 Resignation Deemed - Any member who fails to pay the annual subscription on or before the expiration of six months after it has become due shall be deemed to have resigned from membership of the Trust.

This meant that technically members who had not renewed their subscription were still members until the end of December, and should be sent September and December newsletters. The Trustees suggest that this clause should be modified so that members were given two months' leeway (instead of six). The MBNZT would not be required to send any more newsletters after June, until membership subscriptions for the new year had been paid.

13.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Trust shall be held each year not later than four months after the end of the financial accounting year of the Trust at such place, date and time as the Board shall determine.

It was difficult finalising the accounts and having them audited within a four-month period. Last year's AGM had been held in January, and the 2009 conference/AGM was planned for March. If the clause was changed to nine months, it would be much easier to accommodate all that was required, and would still give two-three months to implement the budget, which needed to be approved at the AGM for the following year.

These changes will be discussed and voted on at the AGM, details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Puriri Moth

Another work from the talented Dr Robert Hoare:

Puriri Moth, you are the Queen
of all things Crunchy, Fat and Green;
beneath the velvet Shades of Night
you bring me Solace and Delight:
with Brimming eyes and Quivering knees
I watch you Buzzing through the Trees
and sometimes when I see you Rocket
like Sparks from an Electric Socket
I wonder – should I Stand and Gawp or
catch you like a hungry Morepork?

But ah alas! When you are Dead
a Heinous change begins to Spread
across your Fine and Furry Fleece:
it is the awful Curse of Grease!
Why so? It simply isn't on
to blame Olivia Newton-John:
Grease was around and All the Rage
before Olivia hit the Stage;
just ask the Oily, Pale and Dreary
ghost of a once Bright Green Puriri:
he'll tell you (if he's worth his Salt)
it's clearly John Travolta's Fault.

Dr Robert Hoare 2002



Fundraising the easy way

Funding for various projects is always an issue – and probably with the financial situation the way it is, it won't get better. Milkweed seed (e.g. swan plant, *Asclepias curassavica*) is often imported, and we have also created a demand for the latter plant in its 'Silky Scarlet' and 'Silky Gold' forms.

Thank you to those of you who have been collecting seeds and passing it on to us. The clean seed has been very useful, either sold or being given to schools.

This has to be done very carefully – for instance one mouldy seed or weevil and everything is wasted. We weigh it and package it professionally. If you are interested in participating in this project please contact jacqui@monarch.org.nz

Visiting Costa Rica

How often do you get an invitation to travel at someone else's expense to an exquisite destination like Costa Rica? Heavens, I didn't even know where it was on the American continent!

It was a great opportunity – to attend the International Butterfly Breeders Association's Convention, to strengthen networking links, and view exquisite butterflies and wildlife in their natural surroundings.

The convention had been going for a few days before I arrived. The first day we visited an inner city butterfly 'farm' Spirogyra Butterfly Gardens, an oasis in the middle of the huge city of San Jose, a steep wilderness area preserved as it may once have been although most inner city land had been developed.

Our guide, entomologist Luis Ricardo Murillo-Hiller, (pictured) was inspirational. There was a netted 'conservatory' where butterflies flew about and enjoyed natural surroundings, although captive, and another area where we watched a video about Costa Rica, how the land was formed and its wildlife. Originally the two American continents were quite separate but with the volcanic activity in central America, a 'bridge' was formed, meaning that some of the creatures of one hemisphere had travelled to the other. In the afternoon we had a series of speakers talking about butterfly farming in Costa Rica. This set me thinking!

There can be a huge gap between conservation and commerce – and kindness to animals doesn't always come into the picture. At one time we saw conservationists handling butterflies in what I considered was an unkind manner – and we saw breeders whose end product is the framed, once-were-living butterflies that are so popular on the walls of some homes.

In Costa Rica there are many people living below what we consider a reasonable standard of living. They need to eke out a living in their local communities rather than shifting to cities to find work. We saw very poor rural villages, but the people have a chance to make an income by captive breeding colourful tropical butterflies, and then euthanasing them, pin them flat and frame them in glass. If they weren't doing this, they would be catching them in the forest, thus reducing the number of species, possibly putting them on the endangered list. If they weren't selling butterflies, they might be chopping down the trees to earn a living...

You can read more about my thoughts in the forum on the

website.

On the Sunday we visited INBioparque, an educational facility for a guided tour along their trails. Another butterfly area, much native flora and fauna with the focus on preserving biodiversity – what WE could all do. Inspirational!

In the afternoon I was to be one of the speakers from a range of different countries: Madagascar, Canada, Israel and Argentina. It was great to see what people were doing to help the world's butterflies.

Firstly I had to educate the delegates as to where NZ was – and our lifestyle. Even though people KNEW I was a New Zealander, they would often refer to me as an Australian! I got the message over in a fun way, and also told them about our small butterfly range and what the MBNZT was doing.

Monday morning we visited the Rainforest Aerial Tram near the Pacific Coast, and took a ride through the treetops and saw life in a rainforest canopy. I didn't complain that it was raining – what else would you want in a RAINforest. Each car had an informative guide and I took hundreds of photographs of the wonderful jungle.

On the Tuesday we travelled all the way to the Pacific Coast and Jaco Beach. We saw crocodiles and visited a small, very poor village for a river trip – amazing birdlife and mangrove wetlands quite different to the mangroves I know.

The rest of the day was at an all inclusive resort, The Best Western at Jaco Beach. Some people swam – in the Pacific or in the pool; they sunbathed, they ate and drank. The highlight for me was seeing the 'leafcutter ants' alongside a path where we'd stopped to take a picture. These ants are amazing - no space to tell you all about them here, but post a message in the forum and I will.

On the last day we were taken to the top of Poas volcano, seeing many of Costa Rica's famous coffee plantations on the way. Rain and mist hid the crater – but which Aucklander has never seen a crater before? I was just pleased it didn't choose

to erupt while I was there.

It was a great event, I came home brimming with information and ideas. And what's more that's a few more people who know where NZ is and what the MBNZT is up to.

The butterflies are the Owl Butterfly (*Caligo memnon*) above, and *Philaethria dido* on the zinnia.

Jacqui Knight

