

On The Wing

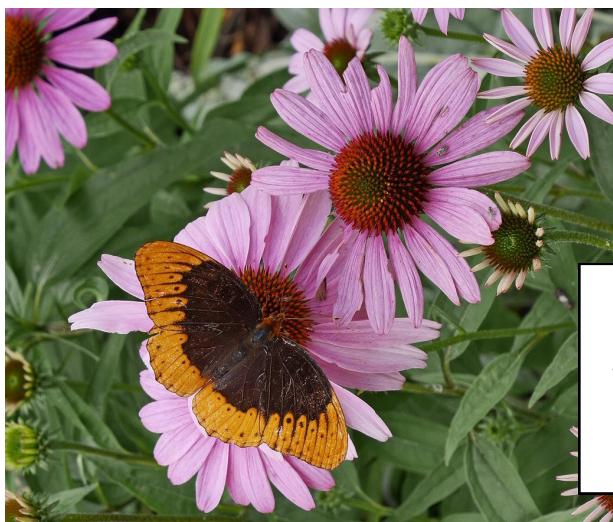
Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter
North American Butterfly Association
August 2018 Volume 11, Number 6
Editor, Bill Haley, wgh@tnaqua.org



Gray Hairstreak, Photo by Bill Haley, 7-17-18

Check-off List for Summer Butterfly Counts:

What to wear: It'll be hot. Dress for the weather. A wide-brimmed hat, short-sleeved shirt, or maybe a lightweight long-sleeved shirt to keep the sun off. Long pants are advised to keep your legs from getting scratched. Pants legs can be tucked into socks to help protect from chiggers, ticks and poison ivy. Wear comfortable close-toed shoes (not sandals or crocs), as we may walk through muddy areas, tall grasses, poison ivy and briars. **Other helpful hints:** Sunblock is a must on sunny days and bug spray will help keep creepy crawlies at bay. Bring close focusing binoculars if you have them. Bring a butterfly field guide if you have one. **Food and drink are important too!** Always bring a small cooler with snacks/sandwiches that can be eaten during travel times from one area to another. Bring plenty of water or other drinks. One bottle of water is not enough for a full day in the field! Bring several. Always stay hydrated in the heat! **NABA fee:** All participants must pay a \$3.00 fee, which goes to NABA. This applies even if you can't stay all day. **Transportation:** You can drive your own vehicle, especially if you plan to leave mid-day, or ride with other counters if you wish. This is recommended, as some of our stops don't have room for more than 3-4 cars to park.



Dennis Bishop sent in this beautiful photo of a male **Diana Fritillary, *Speyeria diana***, nectaring on Purple Coneflower. This Southern Appalachian endemic species is probably the most sought-after regularly occurring butterfly species in our area. It is the one that butterfly watchers want to see!

Fall Seasonal Counts

(*NABA considers any count after July a fall seasonal count*)

Butterfly abundance and diversity typically reaches its peak in late summer. Join us during August for the third count in the Tennessee River Gorge, Soddy-Daisy and Lookout Mountain, GA circles this year. At present, these are the last counts scheduled in 2018.

Saturday, Aug. 4:

Tennessee River Gorge, TN

Meet: 9:30 Eastern, at Food City parking lot, Signal Mtn. Road. Leader: Bill Haley, (423) 326-9248, wgh@tnaqua.org.

Thursday, Aug. 16:

Soddy-Daisy, TN

Meet: 9:30 Eastern at Daisy United Methodist, 9508 Dayton Pike, Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379. Leader: Bill Haley, (contact info above.)

Saturday, Aug. 25:

Lookout Mountain, GA

Meet: 9:30 Eastern at the International Towing and Recovery Museum parking lot on Broad Street, Chattanooga. Leader Bill Haley (contact info above)

Stevenson, Alabama Summer Count Totals:

The Stevenson, Alabama count was conducted on Saturday, July 12. Participants Mike O'Brien, Dave Spicer, Judee Spicer and Bill Haley split up onto two counting parties to walk a total of 3 miles in a combined 11 party hours. It was a very hot day with temperatures from 70-93 F.

Species and Individuals: Pipevine Sw. 19, Spicebush Sw. 3, E. Tiger Sw. 27, Giant Sw. 1, Orange Su. 4, Cloudless Sulphur 27, Sleepy Orange 51, Gray Hairstreak 2 1, E. Tailed Blue 9, Summer Azure 4, American Snout 5, Variegated Fritillary 17, Silvery Checkerspot 13, Pearl Crescent 19, Red Admiral 4, Com. Buckeye 9, Red-sp. Purple 2, Hackberry Emperor 27, N. Pearly-Eye 1, Carolina Satyr 7, Monarch 3, Silver-sp. Skipper 101, Hoary Edge 2, Southern Cloudywing 1, N. Cloudywing 1, Clouded Skipper 3, Least Skipper 3, Fiery Skipper 14, Little Glassywing 1, Sachem 36, Dun Sk. 12, Ocola Skipper 1. **Total: 32 species, 412 individuals.**

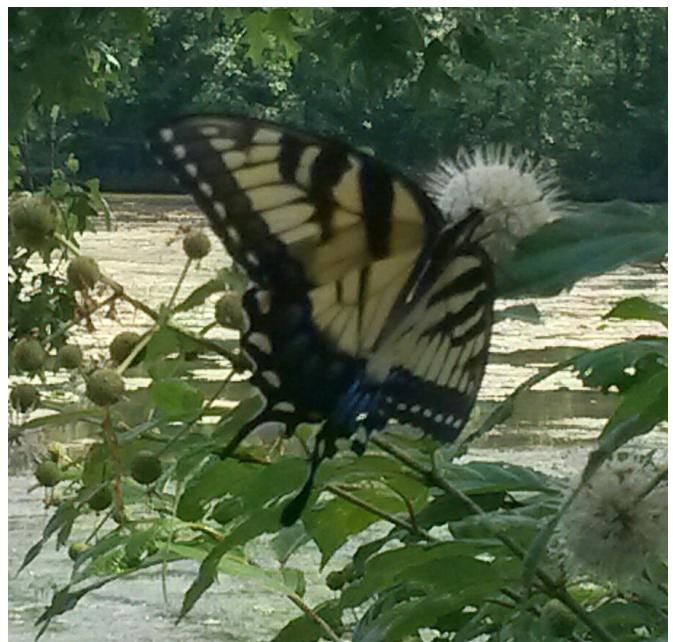
Immatures: Monarch caterpillar - 1 on orange butterflyweed, Goatweed Leafwing caterpillars - 3 on prairie tea.



Mated pair of **Fiery Skippers**, *Hylephila phyleus*, seen at Stevenson Park near the lake during the Stevenson, Alabama count. Female is on the left, male on the right.



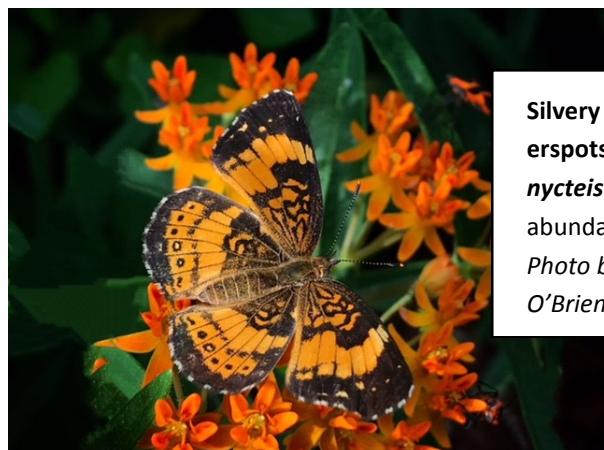
Dun Skipper, *Euphyes vestris*. Photo by Bill Haley



This **Eastern Tiger Swallowtail**, *Papilio glaucus*, was nectaring on Buttonbush at the lakeside in Stevenson Park.



David and Judee Spicer photographed this **Northern Pearly-Eye**, *Enodia anthedon*, during the Stevenson count July 12.



Silvery Checkerspots, *Chlosyne nycteis*, (19) were abundant July 12!
Photo by Mike O'Brien.

Nice Things Come in Small Packages!



Top: Fiery Skipper, male, *Hylephila phyleus*

Bottom: Gray Hairstreak, *Strymon malinus*,
- Both photos by Bill Haley



Join Us!

North American Butterfly Association



The North American Butterfly Association, NABA, was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through use of field marks rather than collecting.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter was formed in 2008. The chapter's territory is centered around southeastern Tennessee, but also encompasses areas of northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Anyone who joins the national organization within a zip code area beginning with 374, 373, 307, 357 or 359 will automatically become a member of the chapter.

It is also possible for people living outside our zip code areas to become members of the Tennessee Valley chapter. When you join or renew your NABA membership, specify that you'd like to be affiliated with the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

Joining online is easy. Go to their website at <http://www.naba.org> and click on Membership. Individual \$35, Family \$45, Institution/Library \$60. There also other sponsorship levels if interested.

Members receive quarterly publications from NABA, "American Butterflies" and "Butterfly Gardener", as well as monthly "On the Wing" newsletters (March-Nov.) from the local Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

The 13th Biennial NABA Members Meeting

will be held in Tallahassee, Florida Sept. 16-19, 2018

Tentative Schedule:

Sunday, Sept. 16:

3:30-7:30pm Registration
7:30-9:00pm Welcome and Program "An Introduction to Butterflies of Northwestern Florida", Dean Jue

Monday, Sept. 17:

8:00-8:45am Workshops (3 concurrent topics)
9:15am Field Trips depart
5:00pm Field Trips return
6:00-7:00pm Social Hour, Book Signing, Exhibits
7:00-9:00pm Banquet and Keynote Speaker

Tuesday, Sept. 18:

8:00-8:45am Workshops (3 concurrent topics)
9:15am Field Trips depart
5:00pm Field Trips return 6:00
-7:00pm Social Hour, Book Signing, Exhibits 7:00-
9:00pm Banquet and Featured Speaker

Wednesday, Sept. 19:

8:00am Field Trips depart
3:00pm Field Trips return
3:00-3:30pm Meeting Finale

Registration Fees:

NABA Members: \$295 per person

Non-members: \$330 per person

You can visit the NABA website, www.naba.org, to register and pay fees online. Registration fees are payable in full at time of registration. Checks or money orders should be payable to NABA. After August 1, 2018 the registration fee will increase to \$320, provided space is available.

Facilities and Accomodations:

Host hotel will be **Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown**; Phone **(850) 422-0071**. A block of rooms with a discounted rate has been reserved for the conference. Mention that you are attending the NABA meeting when registering to obtain the special rate.

Meals: Registration fee includes box lunches on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and banquet dinners Monday and Tuesday nights. They will try to accomodate special dietary preferences whenever possible.

Getting There: You can fly into Tallahassee International Airport. Another alternative, maybe less expensive, would be to fly to Jacksonville, FL and drive 2.5 hours west to Tallahassee.

Activities:

Ground Transportation: Groups will travel to field trip sites by car pooling of participants' private vehicles.

Field Trips: Trip destinations will include several locations within Apalachicola National Forest, Apalachicola River and Wildlife Environmental Area, Big Bend WMA, Torreya State Park and Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve. For butterfly gardeners there will be an opportunity to see a 25-acre property that has been converted from former dairy land into a haven for dozens of butterfly species and native plants. September is the peak of wildflower blooms in north Florida.

Presentations and Workshops: Each day will be highlighted by a series of workshops on topics such as identification, photography, butterfly gardening and butterfly defense mechanisms.

Pre/Post Meeting Field Trips: NABA will help facilitate optional pre-meeting field trips to see disjunct populations of two uncommon butterfly species. At separate locations in Florida, meeting participants may be able to find Dukes' Skippers and Dusky Roadside-Skippers. More info about these optional trips will be available soon.

Field Observations: Registrants will be sent a list of butterflies we might encounter. We encourage you to bring close-focusing binoculars. Cameras and videocams are welcome, but no nets are permitted.

Weather: Expect highs in the high 80's and lows in the high 60's. Keep in mind tropical storms are possible.

After Registering: You will receive a confirmation packet with maps, meeting details, and other information to help you plan your trip.

Butterflies to Expect: There are more than 120 butterfly species in the Tallahassee area. You'll have good chances of seeing Berry's Skipper, Byssus Skipper, Dotted Skipper, Palmetto Skipper and Yehl Skipper. If weather conditions are favorable prior to the conference, we will have colorful roadsides of blooming flowers thronged by swallowtails, fritillaries, and other grass skipper species next to pitcher plant bogs, creating a nature photographer's paradise.

Tallahassee Area Natural Attractions: The Florida Panhandle is one of the 5 richest biodiversity hotspots in North America. The Apalachicola River Basin, just to the west of Tallahassee, has the highest species diversity of reptiles and amphibians in the U.S. and an estimated 1,300 plant species, with 127 of them endemic to the Basin, including dozens of carnivorous plant species. You will be within a 30 minute drive of the Gulf of Mexico.

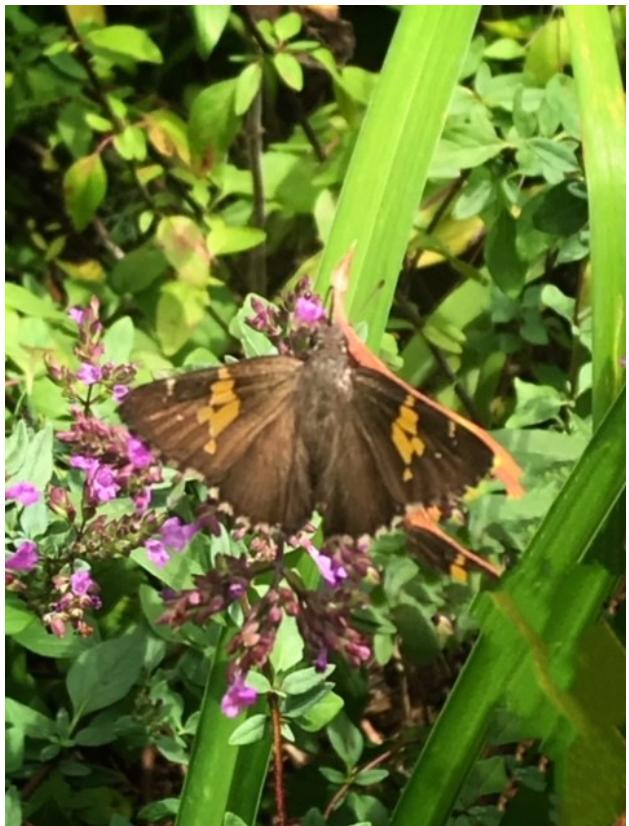


Look at the length of the proboscis on this **Fiery Skipper**!

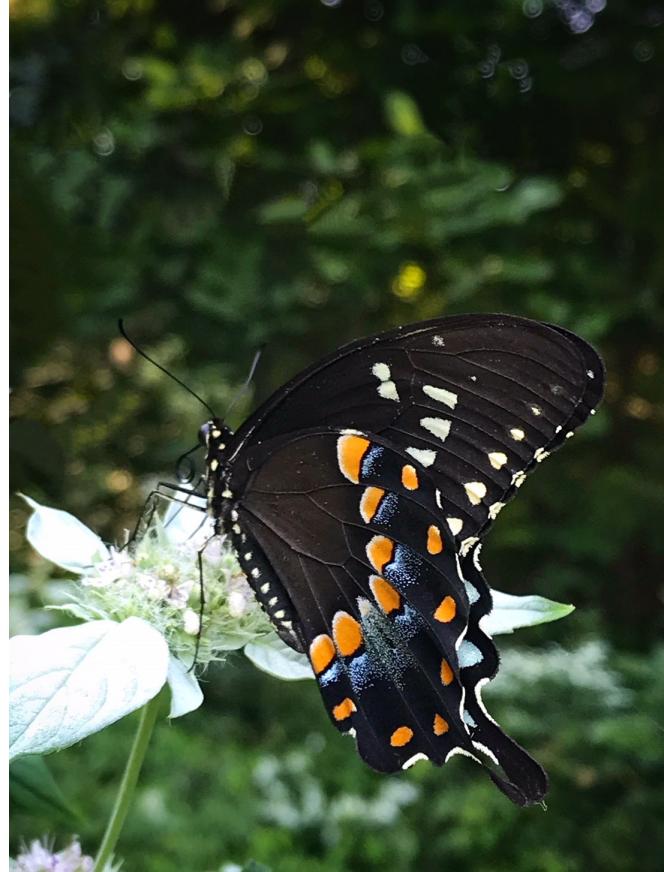
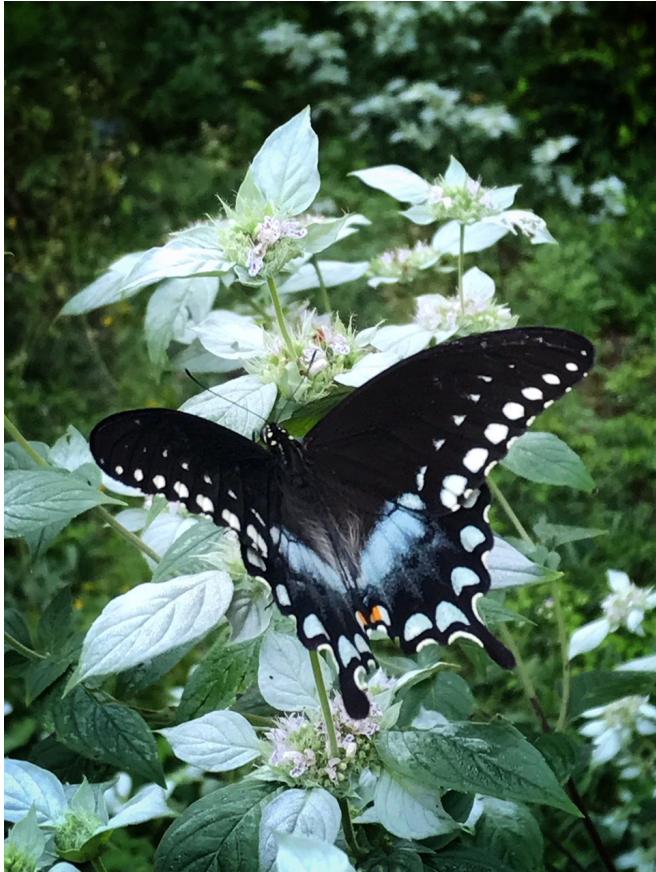


Betsy Bowden got this shot of a **Golden-banded Skipper**, *Autochton cellus*, taken in Big Soddy Gulf on July 27. She said she saw at least 5 nectaring on woodland sunflower blooms. Note the resemblance to the Hoary Edge in the right column.

Sometimes a cause of confusion with the Hoary Edge, the **Silver-spotted Skipper**, *Epargyreus clarus*, has a white/silvery patch in the middle of the hindwing, not along the edge, as on the Hoary Edge. Photo by Bill Haley.



Mike O'Brien sent in these two shots of a **Hoary Edge**, *Echalarus lyciades*. We don't often get to see the upper side of this species!



Mike O'Brien's mountain mint has been attracting a lot of pollinators. This **Spicebush Swallowtail**, *Papilio troilus*, spent a good bit of time at the blooms recently.



Spicebush Swallowtail in flight. Lucky shot by Mike O'Brien during the Stevenson count.

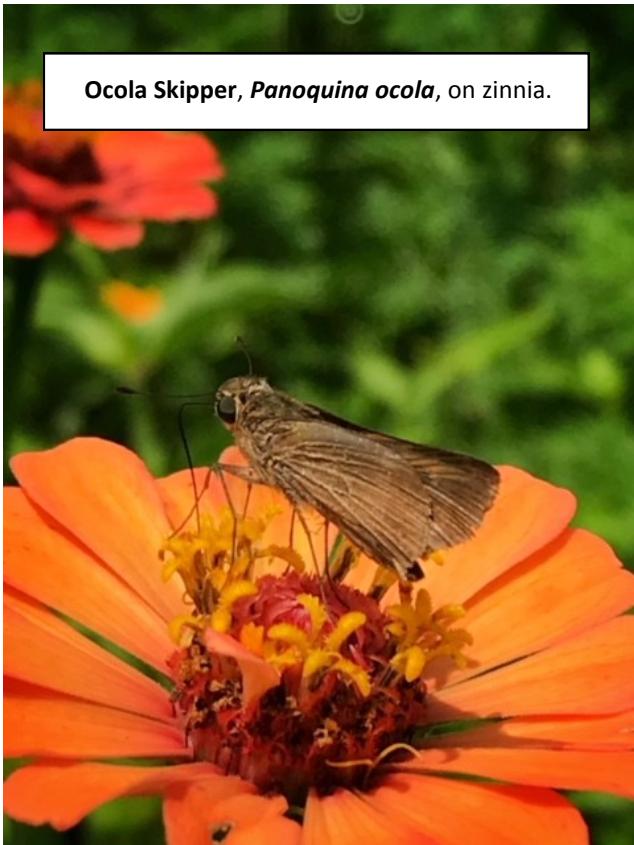


Bill Haley found this Monarch caterpillar in the same field, full of orange butterflyweed.

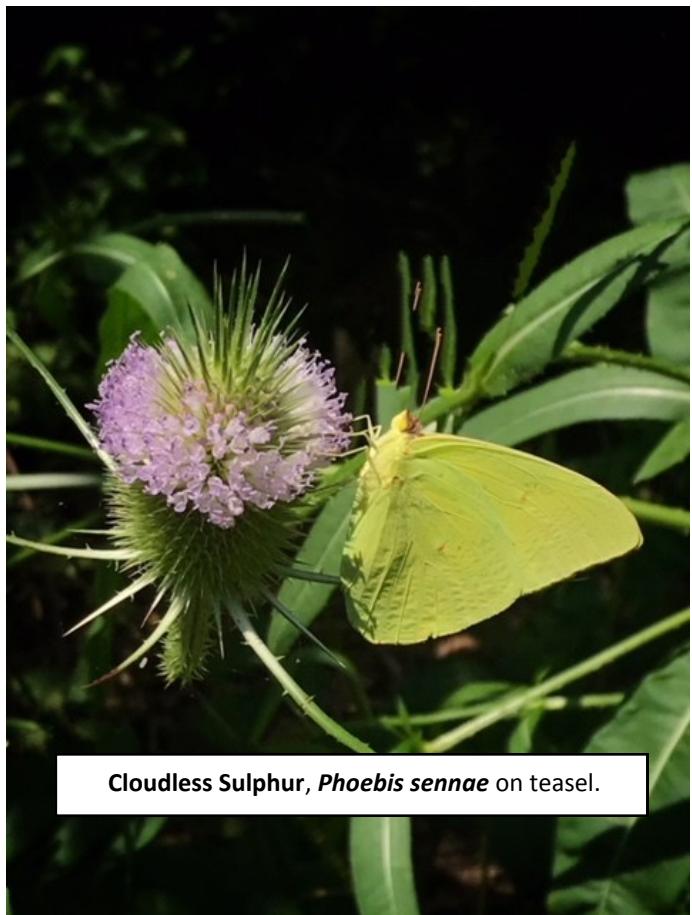
More Photos from the Stevenson, AL Count



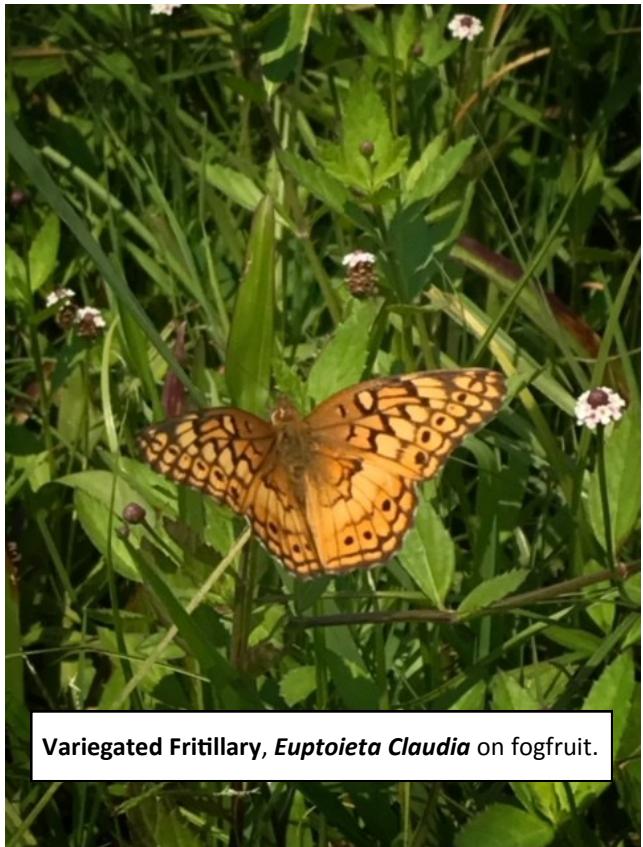
Summer Azure, *Celestrina ladon neglecta*



Ocola Skipper, *Panoquina ocola*, on zinnia.



Cloudless Sulphur, *Phoebis sennae* on teasel.



Variegated Fritillary, *Euptoieta claudia* on fogfruit.

You never know what you will find on a butterfly count, but one thing you can be sure of - you'll find something beautiful! You have three more chances to participate this year, so please make an effort to attend one or more counts in August. Thanks to Mike O'Brien for all the beautiful photos on this page.

Butterflyweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*



Coral Hairstreak visiting the typical orange-colored *Butterflyweed*, *Asclepias tuberosa*. Mike O'Brien photo.

Everyone who plants a butterfly garden should have Butterflyweed! It can be started from seed, but the plants will take a year before they are large enough to bloom. Another method is root cuttings. I save plant information and here is what several authors have to say about Butterflyweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*:

“The plant grows from an enormous, thickened root that does indeed look tuberous, as its scientific name suggests. All the books say that it is difficult to transplant because of its root, but this statement is pure nonsense; in fact, it is one of the easiest of wildflowers to move.”

Another author says: *“Most manuals state that Butterflyweed is difficult to transplant, which is simply not so. It is deep-rooted, but can be moved at any time of the year if certain rules are followed: first, dig as much of the root as you possibly can; second, place the dug plant as soon as possible in a plastic bag or container which prevents its drying out; third and most important, cut back all stems to an inch or two. At the base of each stem you will see one or two tiny buds. These will form new stalks, and often bloom again that season, after replanting. Collected plants should be replanted at the approximate depth at which they were growing and kept well watered for several weeks after replanting.”*

Yet another author describes: *“Large, flat umbels of flowers ranging from bright yellow to reddish orange, but mostly orange. The yellow and red shades are much rarer and much sought after by wildflower enthusiasts. They also added: Easy from seed, but try root cuttings in late spring.”*

With that information, I decided to try an experiment last spring. I had previously gotten permission to dig some Butterflyweed plants in a very large field in Bakewell, Tennessee. One morning I set out with my long-bladed shovel and a couple of buckets. My quest was to find the most yellow and the most red specimens in the field and attempt to bring them home for my garden. There is an old saying the their long taproot “goes straight to China”, and it was with some difficulty that I saved as much of the root as I possibly could from the two plants I dug, although I didn’t get all of it.

Each taproot was about 5-6 inches long. It killed me to cut the beautifully blooming plants, but I followed instructions and cut them down to one inch above ground when I replanted them. I also took cuttings of about 1 1/2 inches of the taproot, and being careful to plant them facing upward the same way they were growing put them in the same bed with the larger plants. I put a stick in the ground beside each one so I could remember where they were. Sure enough, in a few weeks new stems were sprouting on the larger plants and I got a small bloom last summer. I religiously watered everywhere I’d put a root cutting and some of them, but not all, came up last summer. This spring, however, they all sent up small stems and bloomed. Pictured below are my yellow and red variants, which have bloomed well this summer. In fact, I just cut them back after their first big bloom, hoping for another before the summer is out.



The contrast between the yellow and red is quite striking! The root cuttings have the same color as the “parent” plants.



The Gray Hairstreak above clearly preferred the yellow variant and I got many great shots as it contentedly nectared on the abundant blooms. You can see the red variant in the background behind it. My experience proves that if you just follow a few simple rules when transplanting Butterflyweed, you and the many pollinators in your garden can enjoy the results for years to come.