

Flutterby News

Fall 2007

Mariposa of the Month

Gulf Fritillary

Agraulis vanillae (Linnaeus, 1758)

The Gulf Fritillary is a striking, bright orange butterfly of the family Nymphalidae and sub-family Heliconiinae. It was formerly classified in a separate family, the Heliconiidae or longwing butterflies, and like other longwings it does have long, rather narrow wings in comparison with other butterflies. It is not closely related to the true fritillaries. It is a medium to large butterfly, with a wingspan of from 6 to 9.5 cm. Its underwings are buff, with large silvery spots. It takes its name from the fact that migrating flights of the butterflies are sometimes seen over the Gulf of Mexico.

The Gulf Fritillary is commonly seen in parks and gardens, as well as in open country. Its range extends from Argentina through Central America Mexico, and the West Indies to the southern United States, as far north as the San Francisco Bay Area on the west coast. It is occasionally found further north in the US.



Plant of the Month

Cassia(Senna) Alata

Candle Bush

Description

Synonym

Herpetic alata.

Common name

Fleur palmiste, fleur d'artre, candlestick senna, wild senna, ringworm cassia, guajava, ketepeng badak, flor del Secreto, Tarantana, candle bush, akapulko, man-slabriki, akapulco, gelanggang.

Family

Caesalpinaceae (caesalpinia family).

Overview

An erect tropical, annual herb with leathery compound leaves. It grows up to 6' tall. This perennial shrub has erect waxy yellow spikes that resemble fat candles before the individual blossoms open. The large leaves are bilateral - symmetrical opposed and fold together at night. The fruit is a pod, while the seeds are small and square.

Wild senna is indigenous to Suriname and it is found in secondary vegetation or along riverbanks or moist and even wet spots.

It is also a host plant to many species of sulphur caterpillars, included the orange barred sulphure.



Guajava is a fast grower and will flower in the first year.

The leaves have laxative properties and can be effective as such.

Ringworm cassia also has antimicrobial and antifungus activity and can be used against dermatophyte infections such as tinea pedis (athlete's foot).

The leaves of this plant are used in the treatment of ringworm, the seeds as an anthelmintic while the roots can be used against uterus disorders. The crushed leaves are used for skin infections.

Butterfly House Donors

Many people and businesses have made very welcome donations to the Butterfly House in the past few months. Donations of in-kind materials as well as monetary donations are very much appreciated and we would like to recognize them and show our thanks to those who have contributed since the last newsletter.

Gulf Breeze Garden Club

Pak n Fax

Walmart Tiger Point

UF Student Club

Bill & Josie Curtis

Angela Ellis

Santa Rosa Extension Service Horticulture Program

Cindy Thorpe

Okaloosa Master Gardeners

Publix Super Markets, Inc.

Driftwood Garden Club

Theresa Friday

Do It Yourself Pest Control

Linda Urquhart

Carole Simpson

Jasmime Garden Club

Dogwood Garden Club

Virginia Willard

Mary Peterzen

Backridge Tree Service

Steve DuPuis/Motion Maker

Jeanne & Blair Blage

Howard & Cliffogene Stillwell

Tom Lake

Judith Begue

Sandra Coker

Kay Mitchell

Susan Bourgeois

Kazbor's Grill

East River Smokehouse

Cocodries

Leigha Bowden

Karl Smith

Honeysuckle Garden Club

Peggy Gray

Karen Chapman

Shirley Hibbard

Joyce Horgan

Jude Groninger

Gail Campbell

Glen & Dawn Gillen

Robert Peterzen

Jack & Fonda Wetherell

Carpet City

Alan Shuman

Chris Cannon

Tammy Montelios

Judi Purcell

Karen Broughton

Barbara Hagenbucher

Escambia County Master Gardeners

Eleanor Alpliden

Create a waystation to help the monarch butterfly

The monarch butterfly is one of the most well-known butterfly species in North America. They are known not only for their beauty, but also because they are one of the few migratory butterfly species of the United States. Unfortunately, monarch migrations are being threatened by several environmental factors.

Like birds, monarch butterflies follow a pattern of seasonal migration. There are two distinct populations in North America, those that breed in the East and those that breed in the West. Each autumn, millions of monarchs leave their breeding grounds and fly to overwintering sites. The Eastern population overwinters in the mountains of Mexico. The Western breeders spend their winters along the California coast.

A very small number of monarchs overwinter in pine trees at a few sites along the Gulf coast of Florida, near Tampa and west of Tallahassee.

Along their migrational path, monarchs must stop to feed on flower nectar and to roost together at night.



Photo by Paul B. Southerland

But with North America's rural land being developed at an alarming rate, monarchs face an increasing shortage of suitable plants upon which the caterpillars and adults can feed making migration more difficult.

To offset this habitat loss, gardeners and butterfly enthusiasts can set aside special patches of land in an effort to create "Monarch Waystations" — places where monarchs can reproduce in spring and summer, and stop for much-needed nectar breaks as they fly south in the fall.

Without resources - in the form of nectar from flowers - fall migratory monarchs would be unable to make the journey to Mexico. Similarly, without milkweeds along the entire route north in the spring and summer months, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall.

Panhandle Butterfly House Website

Have you accessed our new website yet? www.panhandlebutterflyhouse.org is our website.

We are adding new information regularly. A pictorial history of the PBH has been started and will be complete soon. Announcements of upcoming events are always posted on the home page and there is a current list of donors for all items including walkway bricks, Kaleidoscope Society and cash/supplies. Our contacts page gives you quick access to Theresa's phone number and email links for all the Advisory Council members. We would like more educational content for the site and look forward to some of you sending articles and photos of a general interest about butterflies and butterfly gardening so we can improve the usefulness of the website. Contact our webmaster at webmaster@panhandlebutterflyhouse.org with your content, contributions and suggestions. Thanks very much--Peggy Gray, Web Master



Cliffogene Stillwell,--SRCMG, Joann Childers--ESCMG,Nita Ellithorpe--SRCMG

Volunteers Working in the Gardens



Hal Kurz,Nancy Roberts--OKCMG, Blair Blage--SRCVOL, Bill Ward--SRCMG



Karen Chapman--SRCMG, Bill Skillman--OKCMG, Kay Mitchell--ESCMG, Cliffogene Stillwell.

Panhandle Butterfly House
PO Box 5208
Navarre, FL. 32566