



BUTTERFLIES GO FREE

DATES

February 19 to April 26, 2015

SCHEDULE

Tuesday to Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Open on Monday, March 2 (March Break) and April 6 (Easter)

PLACE

Montréal Botanical Garden
4101, rue Sherbrooke Est
(Pie-IX metro station)

WEBSITE

montrealspaceforlife.ca

FACTS

Number of butterflies and moths
in the greenhouses
1,500 to 2,000

Number of butterflies and moths
released every day
about 100 *

Number of butterflies and moths
released during the event
about 20,000

Total number of species present
during the event
about 75

Number of species observed
during a visit
about 50

Places of origin
**Costa Rica, El Salvador,
Malaysia, Philippines, Tanzania,
and United States.**

Temperature in the greenhouses
24°C to 29°C**

Number of nature interpreters
in the greenhouses
2 to 4

Attendance since 1998
1,984,669

STARS OF THE SHOW

Caligo sp. • Owl butterfly

Pigmentary colour

Each of the thousands of scales on this butterfly's wings contain colour pigments. The scales are arranged like a mosaic, creating a striking pattern. See how the pattern here looks like an owl's eye? Did it fool you?

Morpho helenor • Blue morpho

Structural colour

This butterfly owes its eye-catching colours to the way its scales transform light. When the sun's rays strike the morpho's wings, we see flashes of this almost metallic blue – a colour rarely seen in nature.

Attacus atlas • Cobra moth

Windows

A large moth with remarkable wings! The scales are missing in a few places, exposing the transparent membrane and making it look as though there are holes in the wings. These "windows" let light through.

FAVOURITE PLANTS

Nectar plants

Butterfly bush • Hyacinth •
Yellow sage • Star duster •
Indian hawthorn • Lollypop plant

Host plants***

Asclepias • Calliandra • Key lime •
Guava • Passion flower • Banana

Information

Karine Jalbert
Communications Coordinator
514 872-1453
karinejalbert@ville.montreal.qc.ca

* The Insectarium staff releases the butterflies and moths in front of visitors (schedule varies).

** With relative humidity of between 35% and 60%, the humidex reaches highs of 25°C to 36°C.

*** Plants where females lay their eggs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SEE THE BUTTERFLIES? WHEN ARE THEY MOST ACTIVE?

- **Butterflies are generally more active in the morning, on sunny days,** and when there is a **change in atmospheric pressure.**
- **Butterflies active at dusk** become active **around sunset.**

HOW LONG DO BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS LIVE?

Butterflies live **one month, on average**, with some major differences in life spans. Some moths don't eat, meaning that they lead very short lives – just a few days, enough time to find a partner and mate. Others beat longevity records, such as the monarchs that fly all the way from Quebec to Mexico for the winter.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST INSECTS IN THIS YEAR'S EVENT?

The *Attacus atlas*, *Attacus lorquini* and *Attacus caesar* moths are between 20 and 30 cm. All three come from the Philippines.

HOW MANY SPECIES OF BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?

There are around **175,000 species** of moths and butterflies in the world. Nearly **12,500 are found in North America and 2,965 in Québec.**

HOW LONG HAVE BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS BEEN ON EARTH?

According to scientists, the oldest known moth fossil is **190 million years old.**

DO ALL CATERPILLARS BECOME BUTTERFLIES OR MOTHS?

Yes. Butterflies systematically go through a number of stages: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly. Moth chrysalises are also enclosed in protective cocoons. The time the insect spends as a caterpillar allows it to store energy, while it undergoes profound anatomical and physiological changes as a chrysalis, and adulthood is devoted to reproduction.

WHERE DO THE BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS COME FROM?

The insects in Butterflies Go Free come from butterfly farms in 10 different countries. Butterfly farms are a way to protect butterflies and their habitats by creating fair-trade, sustainable businesses that get local communities involved. By encouraging butterfly farms through the years, the **Montréal Insectarium has preserved more than 500 hectares of rainforest in Costa Rica, the equivalent of 1000 soccer fields.**

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