



Hallberg Butterfly Gardens

The Pipevine

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Open Gardens Day 2011 A 100-Year Celebration

By Louise Hallberg

Sunday, June 26, 2011 is a celebration of 100 years of history. It is also the 14th annual celebration of the non-profit, Hallberg Butterfly Gardens. This year's Open Gardens will feature special displays highlighting the Hallbergs' 100-year residence at the historic home.

The habitat was started by Alfred and Della Hallberg when they first moved into the house in 1911. At that time, there were hops, a hop kiln, hop picking and harvesting, an orchard with cherries, prunes, pears, and berries, and an apple dryer where apples were processed. They were cored, peeled, sliced, cut and spread on trays, sulphured, dried by wood heat (or gas heat in later years), and then prepared for sale. Apples were originally picked from ladders and placed into in apple lug boxes, much later into wooden bins, and eventually into plastic bins. Some were sold as fresh apples and some were used in making Apple Time™ apple juice.

Eventually there was no market for cherries so those trees were cut; the same happened for the pears and prunes. Berries were planted between the apple trees, and were eliminated when the apple trees planted in 1948 in the north lot came into production. In 1994, old trees began falling and so a block out front was replaced with Golden Supreme Delicious, Best-Ever, Fuji's and Gala. A few remaining failing old trees are being replaced yearly, so the Wagners, Greening, Arkansas Black, and Newton Pippin are gone. Gravensteins, Delicious, Jonathans, and Rome Beauties remain.

There was an extensive vegetable garden down in the pasture area and some produce was canned, and later frozen; many fruits were canned. Louise's mother, Della, was a 1914 Graton Community Club charter member. Her father, Alfred, served as Trustee for Oak Grove Elementary School and Analy High School. He worked continuously to get apples to market when mature, and started the idea of the Apple Blossom Tour signs, which he posted for many years. He installed a weather station in 1930 and shared results with the agricultural department for many years. Louise has continued the weather reporting since 1962.

Established as a not-for-profit in 1997, Hallberg Butterfly Gardens has conducted tours for children and adults over the last two decades. More than 25,000 visitors have enjoyed the gardens and have been inspired by the sanctuary for wildlife and butterflies.

This Open Gardens event is free to the public with no reservations required. No pets please. The celebration includes a plant sale with many butterfly nectar plants and Dutchman's pipevine, the host plant for the Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly.

Louise Hallberg and HBG President, Don Mahoney, watch fun-filled crafting at the Children's Art Table. 2010



Louise and her younger sister, Esther, have tea with their dolls in the front yard. 1922

Books, tote bags and shirts will be sold. Activities include butterfly and bird sightings, wildflower displays, an exhibit of beneficial insects by Sonoma State University students, the new Butterfly Creek water feature, children's crafts, and self-guided walking tours through the historic habitat of the Gardens. There is a hand rail down 18 steps to the meadow and limited wheel chair access on the property.

For information call 707-823-3420 or see www.hallbergbutterflygardens.org.



The Gardens Through the Year

By Louise Hallberg

At times in early spring it is discouraging to walk down paths and to see so much to do — weeding, pruning, raking, and cleaning trash. Then the wild radish blooms on the hill and in the meadow. The “weed” is both a food plant for caterpillars and a nectar plant for adult insects. Penstemon, blue salvia, rosemary, ceanothus, and the very old bridal wreath bush with little white flowers on many branches join the chorus. February sees tiny Dutchman’s pipevine flowers beginning. They will grow to be an inch or two more in length. Are there other blooms that grow in size as they mature?

Gradually the many flats of wildflowers started from seed in the vivarium are transplanted to open areas — baby blue eyes, tidy tips, five spot, clarkia, madia, farewell to spring, bachelor buttons, phacelia, paint brush, and scabiosa — all of these are transplanted annually. Other perennial nectar plants found around the garden are red columbine and bidens, a low spreader that blooms almost year round. Lavender,

erysimum and money plant are also very popular spring nectar plants.

We can never get enough milkweeds to winter over, so in May we replenish *Asclepias currassavica* from local nurseries to plant on the hill, in the north garden and around the ponds. We hope Monarchs can find our plants, but in recent years few Monarchs were sighted.

Last fall the meadow and hillside were covered with long-blooming madia. We had both all-yellow and yellow-with-maroon-centers blossoms. The flower closes in the sun, making mornings and cloudy days the best time to see their color. We didn’t find any plants reseeding themselves this March. Birds may have eaten all the seed or the plants need more time to come up. Seedlings from the vivarium will take their place on the hill this season. Bees and hummingbirds always hover over Hot Lips salvia, with red blossoms and white blossoms. Other fall favorites of butterflies and bees are the bright deep blue asters by the pond and low growing asters which attract ringlets, skippers, mylitta crescents and field crescents.

The old Catalpa tree south of the house is propped up and still here. Many years ago an arborist told me it would not last long. It is different from most Catalpas because it does not produce any seed pods after it blooms for about three weeks in June, about three weeks later than others. It is very fragrant and hummingbirds love it. Long ago, I had 12 cuttings; only one sprouted and is now planted by the northwest bridge.

Butterflies, birds, bees, flowers and trees always provide something interesting in the garden.



Anise Swallowtail Butterfly

Anise Swallowtail Butterfly

By Louise Hallberg

Butterfly sightings at the Gardens have been recorded since 1992. Our numbers record a noticeable decline in the number of Anise Swallowtail butterflies seen. Early records report sighting the Anise butterfly almost daily from March through October. Weather always has a dramatic effect on sightings in early spring. In 2010 there were few sightings in March, April, and May due to the late, cold rains. A few were sighted from June through September and one in October.

Caterpillars were frequently found on fennel west of the meadow, in the meadow, west of the barn, by the pond and in the north garden. In 2010 the first three caterpillars were found June 25th and were shown on Open Gardens Day. These caterpillars are not toxic to birds, and jays especially enjoy feeding on the Anise caterpillars. We bring in the caterpillars we find and feed them wild fennel in cages. We brought in 27 caterpillars by July 23rd. By August 30th all the caterpillars had finished feeding and were in chrysalis.

Most of these chrysalises will emerge in 2011. We have had six emerge from last year’s chrysalis. Earlier years typically had about 130 sightings a year. From 2007 to current data, total sightings have been between 65 and 90 per year.

Activity Statistics 2010 (Number of guests shown in parentheses)				
Month	Total Tours	Groups	Children’s Tours	Open Gardens
JAN				
FEB	1 (1)	1 (1)		
MAR				
APR	10 (61)	5 (17)	5 (44)	
MAY	50 (416)	13 (74)	37 (342)	
JUN	18 (120)	10 (47)	8 (73)	(1600)
JUL	28 (89)	28 (89)		
AUG	27 (111)	24 (84)	3 (27)	
SEP	22 (80)	20 (71)	2 (9)	
OCT	4 (26)	4 (26)		
NOV				
Total Tours	160	105	55	
Total Guests	(2503)	(409)	(494)	(1600)

Pipevine Swallowtail Notes

By Louise Hallberg

Beneficial habitat has increased greatly since 1990 when we first started the special Butterfly Gardens. Then we were seeing maybe fifty Pipevine Swallowtails flying a day; now we see maybe ten a day. In earlier years I counted over one hundred eighty (180) chrysalises—in 2010 the count was seven and none were raised in the house, compared to fifty in 2009.

So how many will we see flying when the weather warms up? Last year the first eggs were found April 22, 2010, compared to March 30, 2009. The cold, rainy, windy weather will have an impact on the sightings this spring. Last spring, from March 18 to July 16, Pipevine butterflies were released from the fifty chrysalises protected in the house. Much time is required to feed and take care of caterpillars inside that eat for six weeks or longer and vines need to be cut daily. I have none this year. Hopefully there are many chrysalises hidden somewhere and will be hatching later when the weather warms up.

In 2010, the first caterpillar was seen May 5 and very, very, unusual, one was seen late on August 26. In early years, Pipevine Swallowtails were seen almost every day in summer through October.

A Pipevine butterfly has emerged from a chrysalis on a horseshoe



Last year very few were seen—just like the last six years.

What a surprise for the Hidden Valley kindergarten class that came to the Gardens on May 5, 2010. As they made the tour around by the barn, they saw a chrysalis high up in the middle of a horseshoe hanging on a nail on the barn wall. It had been there a long time. In the spring of 2009, the caterpillar had finished eating pipevine in front of the house and it had crawled through the brush and safely across the parking area, then up the wall to go into the chrysalis and remain there for anywhere from nine months to a year. When the children spotted the chrysalis that day, it was breaking open!

After witnessing this, they went on their way down to the meadow. On their way back, they returned to the barn and saw the beautiful black Pipevine butterfly drying its wings. It was getting ready for a flight into the Gardens to get a drink from the flowers. A fascinating sight in nature to be remembered by the children.

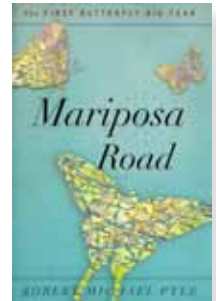
Once again, we hope hidden chrysalises will be emerging into butterflies and we will be seeing Pipevine Swallowtails flying in 2012.

A New Butterfly Book

Mariposa Road The First Butterfly Big Year

Authored by Robert Michael Pyle

As described on the 2010 inside jacket flap...“Part road trip tale, part travelogue of lost and found landscapes,



all good-natured natural history, *Mariposa Road*, tracks Bob Pyle’s journey across the United States as he races against the calendar in his search for as many of the eight hundred species of American butterflies as he can find.” Bob describes his visit to Louise and the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens in Ray 2, subchapter 19, page 164, under the caption “Double Scotch on the Rocks.” Bob comments “it was *Papilio* city at the old rock-rimmed spring—anise, tiger, and pipevine swallowtails all zipping and zooming over juniper, Japanese maple, lilac, and rhododendron, and coming down to nectar on purple wall flowers...” Bob comments we all wish we could do more to help this “ancient dynamo,” who has been about the best butterfly ambassador any of us has ever known—and who just keeps going. Louise is still the miracle we have come to know and love.

In the town of Sebastopol, a book signing by the author was held at our locally owned Copperfield’s Books on a cold, rainy evening. Louise, as well as other Gardens enthusiasts attended. Autographed copies are available at the bookstore.

Exerpts by Patricia Dervin

An Aberration in the Gardens

By Kathy Pearson

On September 21, 1995, as Louise was making her daily rounds through the garden with her camera in hand, she spied what she thought was a West Coast Lady butterfly nectaring east of the Federal weather station. But this butterfly looked very different. For five days in a row, Louise and this butterfly returned to the same location in the garden; Louise with her camera, and the butterfly to feed. Unable to identify this beauty from her pictures, Louise requested the expertise of Bob Stewart at Marin County Department

of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Service and Bob Langston of Kensington, California. Both responded that her butterfly was an aberration (mutation) form of *Vanessa annabella* (West Coast Lady), *Vanessa annabella ab. letcheri* (Letcher's West Coast Lady), identified and illustrated in John A. Comstock's 1927 *Butterflies of California*.

According to Bob Langston, "aberrant forms are rare, but tend to repeat in populations throughout the years—decades, scores, centuries or longer." What is an aberration? An aberration is a differentiation in a butterfly's normal wing pattern. Butterfly aberrations can be the result of a genetic trait variation, which can be found in a

West Coast Lady Butterfly



Letcher's Butterfly

remote ancestor, assumed lost to a species that reappears or environmentally induced by extreme cold temperatures at specific times during pupal (chrysalis) stage development.

Art Shapiro, professor of evolution and ecology at the University of California Davis, contributed that "the study of how aberrations arise was a very important element of evolutionary and developmental biology circa 1900, and continues today using sophisticated molecular-genetics techniques." His *Field Guide to Butterflies of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento Valley Regions* (UC Press, 2007) discusses aberrations on pages 78 and 201 and figures it on Plate 23.

There is something about being in the right place at the right time at Hallberg Butterfly Gardens...not only may you experience a miracle, you might even see an aberration.

Butterflies from One Year to the Next

By Louise Hallberg

March of 2010 had some record high temperatures; it was 83 degrees on the 18th. Warm temperature is one that invites butterflies to emerge from chrysalises, the dormant protective stage between caterpillar and adult forms. Several species winter-over in adult form, then they warm up and become active.

On March 23rd a brightly colored California Sister was flying in front of the house. On the 27th of March I released an Anise Swallowtail butterfly that emerged from a chrysalis in an indoor cage. A

second "wild" one was observed outside. A Cabbage White butterfly and either a Tortoise Shell or Painted Lady were seen flying.

March of 2011 produced heavy rain. My weather station has recorded 47 inches at the end of March. This is seven inches above average. Butterfly sightings during the month of March were few. On a warm sunny day a Cabbage White, Red Admiral, Painted Lady and a Pipevine Swallowtail were observed. With continued rain and heavy wind we will have to wait.

By sharing the knowledge of butterflies and providing for their habitat, we seek to promote and inspire the appreciation and conservation of the wonders of nature.

It is my fervent wish to enhance and preserve the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens so that future generations will always have the opportunity to behold the beauty of nature's wonderful miracle—the butterfly.

— Louise Hallberg, 1997

STATISTICS: Butterfly Species Sightings in 2010

Family Name	Common Name	Latin Name	First Date Seen	Last Date Seen	
PAPILIONIDAE	Pipevine Swallowtail	<i>Battus philenor</i>	March 22	October 26	
	Anise Swallowtail	<i>Papilio zelicaon</i>	March 24	October 5	
	Western Tiger Swallowtail	<i>Papilio rutulus</i>	March 24	September 28	
PIERIDAE	Cabbage White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	February 15	November 24	
	Orange Sulfur (Alfalfa)	<i>Colias eurytheme</i>	July 4	October 5	
	California Dogface	<i>Colias eurydice</i>	March 15	March 22	
LYCAENIDAE	Purplish Copper	<i>Lycaena helloides</i>	June 27	June 27	
	Great Purple Hairstreak	<i>Atlides halesus</i>	June 27	June 27	
	Gray (Common) Hairstreak	<i>Strymon melinus</i>	May 29	August 31	
	Spring Azure (Echo Blue)	<i>Celastrina ladon</i>	June 9	July 23	
	Acmon Blue	<i>Plebejus acmon</i>	March 24	September 24	
	Unidentified Blue		October 4	October 4	
NYMPHALIDAE	Gulf Fritillary	<i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	June 22	September 12	
	Field Crescent	<i>Phyciodes campestris</i>	June 7	September 27	
	Mylitta Crescent	<i>Phyciodes mylitta</i>	April 7	November 12	
	Variable Checkerspot	<i>Euphydryas chalcedona</i>	June 28	June 28	
	Satyr Comma (Anglewing)	<i>Polygonia satyrus</i>	July 8	July 8	
	California Tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis californica</i>	March 19	June 27	
	Mourning Cloak	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	February 16	June 27	
	American Lady	<i>Vanessa virginiensis</i>	August 22	October 6	
	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	February 15	November 12	
	West Coast Lady	<i>Vanessa annabella</i>	June 4	November 30	
	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	March 26	November 30	
	Common Buckeye	<i>Junonia coenia</i>	April 8	November 12	
	Lorquin's Admiral	<i>Limenitis lorquini</i>	April 24	October 18	
	California Sister	<i>Adelpha bredowii</i>	May 23	September 23	
	California Common Ringlet	<i>Coenonympha tullia, Calif.</i>	April 25	October 12	
	Great Basin Wood-Nymph	<i>Cercyonis pegala</i>	August 11	August 11	
	Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	March 22	December 13	
		Unidentified Lady		April 8	April 8
	HESPERIIDAE	Proterpius Duskywing	<i>Erynnis proterpius</i>	April 23	September 24
		Mournful Duskywing	<i>Erynnis tristis</i>	April 22	October 14
Common Checkered-Skipper		<i>Pyrgus communis</i>	May 5	October 6	
Fiery Skipper		<i>Hylephila phyleus</i>	September 12	September 12	
Sachem Skipper		<i>Atalopedes campestris</i>	May 23	October 6	
Woodland Skipper		<i>Ochlodes sylvanoides</i>	June 2	October 6	
Umber Skipper		<i>Poanes melane</i>	September 23	October 5	
		Unidentified Skipper	<i>unknown</i>	May 4	November 24

year	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
# of species sighted	27	26	31	33	21	35	28	33	32	30	32	32	36	38	27	32	32	38	38

Fifty-nine of California's 236 native butterfly species are commonly seen in the San Francisco Bay Area. A total of 54 different species have been catalogued visiting at Hallberg Butterfly Gardens over the last 18 years...some just once, or only rarely, and some establishing populations in our enhanced habitat.

Land Use Changes Over Time

By Ingrid Stearns

The Hallberg Butterfly Gardens is a magical place, a delight to behold. One can see how butterflies, birds, dragonflies, and other forms of wildlife are attracted to this place. It is reminiscent of the kind of diversity of life that may have once covered this land.

Yet the vibrancy and life that embodies this place today is the result of small but significant choices and changes that have happened over the last hundred years, since Louise's parents, Alfred and Della Hallberg, first moved into the house in 1911. At that time, the land surrounding the house was much more open, with less shrubs and herbaceous plants. The trees around the house were a lot younger then, and much smaller in size.

In addition to caring for the extensive orchards and vegetable gardens, Louise's parents raised horses, pigs, a cow, and chickens by the barn. Louise's mother, Della, made butter for sale and she sold eggs as well. She bought sugar by the 100-pound sack, and big bags of flour, and made everything from scratch. She kept meticulous records of all their spending, down to the penny for every item purchased. It is amazing to read through their books and see how little consumer spending occurred back then.

The beginnings of the butterfly gardens happened quite by chance. Della

planted flowers in the yard, some of which could provide nectar to butterflies, but none of them were actually host plants for the caterpillars. In the 1920s, when Louise was a student at Oak Grove School, her class was studying flowers. Della was visiting her sister-in-law on Olivet Road and spotted the native Dutchman's pipe plant with its unique curved, tubular flowers. She brought it home and planted it by the tank house. Little did she know, it was the host plant for the Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly and would someday provide the nourishment needed for the young Pipevine caterpillars. The butterfly gardens had been born.

Almost fifty years later, in 1990, Louise was seeing about fifty Pipevine Swallowtails flying around in a single afternoon. She called the Strybing Arboretum and spoke with a volunteer named Barbara Deutsch, who was so interested that she came up to see for herself. Barbara brought with her Don Mahoney, who would become one of the founding board members of the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens nonprofit, and Jeff Caldwell, a landscape architect. Jeff



1911 South Side of House

encouraged Louise to begin planting the open area to the north of the house where it was sunnier. Thus began the modern-day expansion of the butterfly gardens.

Other changes in the landscape occurred over time as well. The Black Oak tree behind the house was left to grow, even though it would have been easier to build the additions on to the back of the house without it. Now, 100 years later, this same oak tree is approximately 200 years old, and has been designated Sonoma County Heritage Tree #24. It is enormous in size.

1912 Hallberg Hop Kiln



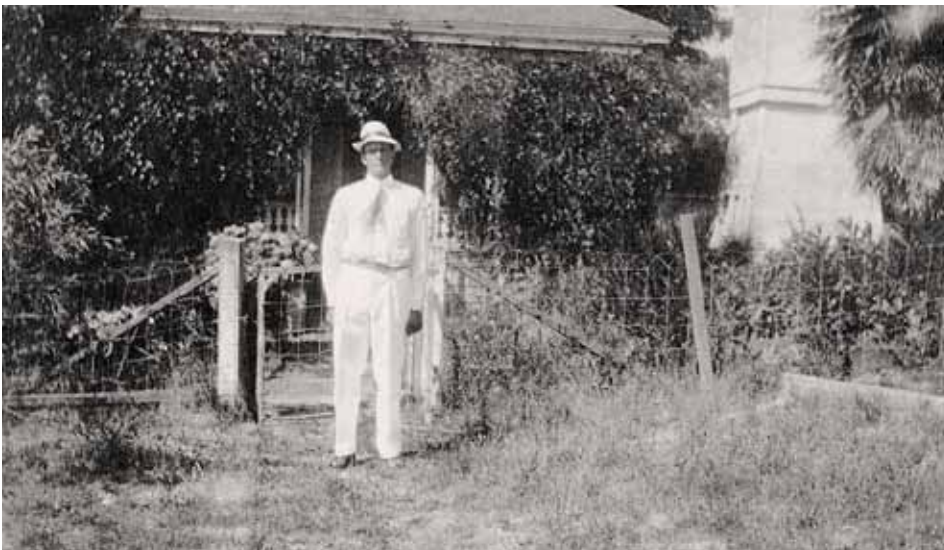
1912 Della Hallberg Feeding Piglet



1917 Louise in Front Yard



1916 Cousin Ida Neep and Heritage Oak Tree



September 1916, Alfred Hallberg

1915 Apple Dryer



The Eucalyptus trees had been planted years before for windbreaks, but as they grew tall they began shading out the apple trees, and so a number of them were cut down. Yet many still remain, and they have served as nesting habitat for the Great Horned Owls.

Over time, the farm animals have been replaced by wildlife; the pens replaced by habitat plants. The Butterfly Gardens today are a place of refuge for many species of butterflies and birds. Flowers bloom everywhere, and the vegetation is abundant. It is a feast for the senses, not only for the butterflies but for the humans too. Schoolchildren and visitors from all over come to experience this diverse habitat. It serves to inspire people that they too can create habitats for butterflies wherever they are, whatever the current state of their land. The Hallberg Butterfly Gardens is an outstanding example of how little things done over time can create great changes for the future. It is an inspiration to us all.

Open Gardens 2010

By Louise Hallberg

It was a record-breaking day with 1,600 visitors coming to visit the gardens on a 91 degree day. Eight hundred of the guests were from out of the county. Visitors walking down the driveway could look at children's art on a clothes line hung between apple trees. Two golf carts delivered those who weren't up for the walk. The San Francisco Chronicle and the Press Democrat both gave excellent coverage to the Open Gardens event. A guest book welcomed them all to sign in and to identify their



Louise Hallberg shares her expertise on butterfly host and nectar plants in the barn.

"Thank you" art work done by classrooms after field trips.



home towns. About 800 visitors were from 23 towns in Sonoma County, and 800 persons were from 58 cities in other California counties. We also had visitors from Washington, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Texas, Rhode Island, New Mexico, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, New York and Missouri. Push pins in the world map identify origins of visitors over the years from 45 states and 29 foreign countries and attracted much attention.

Open Gardens always includes a plant sale, with pictures and growing information. We try to have some of the favorites from the Hallberg Gardens as well as many donations from our nursery friends, California Flora and Shooting Star Propagations. Sonoma State students provided a setup with microscopes to view beneficial insects. Another area displayed butterfly pictures and host food plants unique to the species. Many visitors were not aware of the relationship between butterflies and plants. Butterfly adults nectar on favorite flowers but eggs and caterpillars have very specific food plant requirements.

At the top of the hill a record number of 32 birds were seen or heard. A long table in the barn displayed imaginary bird sculptures by Terry Carroll's 4th Grade class from Oak Grove School.

2010 Sightings

Butterfly Sightings

Anise Swallowtail, Brown Skipper
Buckeye, Cabbage White
California Tortoiseshell, Checkerspot
Echo Blue or Spring Azure
Grey Hairstreak, Great Purple Hairstreak
Mourning Cloak, Mylitta Crescent
Painted or American Lady
Pipevine Swallowtail, Red Admiral
Purplish Copper, Tiger Swallowtail

Bird Sightings

Acorn Woodpecker, American Crow
American Goldfinch, American Robin
Anna's Hummingbird, Bushtit
Ash-throated Flycatcher, Barn Swallow
Bewick's Wren, California Towhee
California Quail, Cassin's Vireo
Chickadee, Great Horned Owl
House Finch, House Sparrow
Lesser Goldfinch, Mourning Dove
Northern Mockingbird, Northern Oriole
Nuttalls Woodpecker, Osprey
Tree or Violet Green Swallow
Turkey Vulture, Song Sparrow
Spotted Towhee, Warbling Vireo
Western Bluebird, Western Scrub Jay
Western Wood Peewee
White Breasted Nuthatch, Wild Turkey

This was a colorful and whimsical display. At the south edge of the meadow were wildflowers for visitors to study and observe. In front of the house, Pipevine caterpillars—black with orange tufts—were busy eating the pipevine food plant. The tour continued around the house in the wooded environment to reach the north garden. Nectar flowers and apple orchards attract many butterflies to this area. Visitors could get water to drink, books to identify local butterflies, pretty bags and patches. A children's craft table was filled all day. Face painting was popular, and the Redwood Origami Club was teaching children how to make paper butterflies.

Because of the large attendance and heat, we ran short of bottled water, some books, and maps for self-guided tours. Forty volunteers were busy all day answering questions and providing information. We've made bigger plans for the 2011 Open Gardens Day.



Louise at newly-completed Butterfly Creek

Butterfly Creek— My Dream

By Louise Hallberg

Butterfly Creek, created in 2010, is a dream come true. After many years of planning, the creek was built to attract wildlife, especially the California Sister butterfly. They lay eggs on oaks and are attracted to damp earth where the adults congregate. We see this butterfly occasionally in the Gardens.

Butterfly Creek is very pretty. It is 35 feet long by the path just west of the barn. There are several damp sand areas along the rushing water. Many host and nectar plants donated by the Strybing Arboretum and California Flora Nursery are planted on both sides of the Creek. Butterflies should enjoy the dogwoods, amorpha, and tall grasses that are planted west of the raised area.

Please come to see the new special place created to attract wildlife and please visitors.

Monarchs

By Louise Hallberg

Monarchs didn't show up in our area until late in the 2010 season. We found the first eggs on milkweed plants in the meadow on September 28th. Catarina transplanted the plant with four eggs into a pot to bring inside. Three more eggs were found on milkweed in the meadow and brought in on November 4th. Milkweed plants were placed on the counter so the caterpillars could crawl when looking for a place to go into chrysalis.

From the seven eggs we had two adults emerge in December and both were released in Bolinas. Monarchs winter over as adults. During cold periods they cling together in large groups for protection from the temperature and rain. Their metabolism is dormant, there is no

mating nor egg laying, and they wait for warm weather and flowers. When adults lay eggs in our garden in late September and November there is little time for the egg and caterpillar to mature to adult and then find other Monarchs to winter with. In recent years, we have had success feeding them but little success with chrysalis. In an earlier year, we released over 100 adults.

We have gotten reports from Pacific Grove, a popular wintering spot for Monarchs west of the Rockies, that they were seeing hundreds of monarchs. They usually see thousands of Monarchs. Mexico has had killing frosts and continues to have forests depleted. We are hoping this year will be a good year for Monarchs.

MONARCH RELEASES

Year	Releases	Tachinid Fly Losses
1997	108	n/a
1998	53	80
1999	18	11
2000	82	5
2001	12	n/a
2002	22	4
2003	28	2
2004	51	20
2005	7	7
2006	57	3
2007	3	n/a
2008	24	3
2009	0	18*
2010	2	2*

*Due to late hatch, too cold (not tachinid flies.)

Birds in Our Gardens

By Louise Hallberg

We love all our bird friends. In 2010 we were happy to see birds in many of the 11 bird houses erected years ago: chickadees at the top of the hill, nuthatches in a box hung in the persimmon tree, swallows in a box across from the apple tree, blue birds in two different boxes up the road, sparrows in another box, and starlings in top of the telephone pole by the barn. What was likely the Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen passing through several afternoons.

In spring many juncos and sparrows come for chick-scratch feed on the ground in the driveway and north path. They usually leave in April to return in October. They stayed longer this year, taking sunflower seeds from the feeder on the porch rail. June 3, Leah and Alexandra saw chickadees take seeds to a nearby camellia branch and break them open to feed babies waiting there with wings open. Linda saw chickadees going in and out of a box on the hill. It is unusual for them to use a box. The white-throated and black-chinned sparrows were seen by several visitors. Turkeys are a pest, scratching around plants and coming up to the house to eat sunflower seeds. Two frequent the garden by the house and 18 were counted in the orchard. June 6 Catarino saw a baby nuthatch on the sidewalk fluttering to shrubbery. Later a snake was there. We were told it couldn't eat the bird. We hoped the parent found it and was able to help.

In July and August many baby quail were seen. We always hope they survive but the loss is usually great. July 14 and many weeks after, a brown towhee hammered on the kitchen window. We hung colored paper and newspaper but the bird stayed from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The acorn woodpeckers are not seen

as often as before. Before the dead poplar trees in the lower meadow fell during a storm several years ago, many woodpeckers were always making holes for nests in the dead trees and gathering acorns to stuff into holes and a nearby bird box. A few birds have remained in the Gardens since the trees fell.

Great horned owls were seen and heard off and on. There were no babies this year. They need to find an empty nest to reuse because they do not build their own. Several visitors were happy to get a picture of owls.

The swifts have nested in the chimney since 1998. In the spring of 2010, Kathi Jacobs and I heard little ones but I did not see the adults flying in to feed them. Later I discovered two dead birds in the fireplace—Peter Leveque came and also found eggs, so we wonder if the birds fell out of the nest. They are very small birds with tiny feet to cling to the brick chimney; we could not determine if they were adults or babies. The birds are airborne most of the time. They cannot land on a vine or branch. The chimney sweep checked, and saw that the nest was far down, just above the fireplace. We will watch carefully this year to see if we should remove the old nest and maybe they would make a new one.

In the fall of 2009 the swifts roosted in the chimney in September and October for the first time here. On August 10, 2010 I saw one bird fly in at 6:30 p.m. to roost. I watched each night at sunset and for the next 10 days or so, at first more than 30 birds, then 19 and then only one bird dropped in. They roosted for far fewer days in August and were gone, compared to many days in 2009, when they were here from September 6 through October 9. If anyone has experience with swifts in their chimney it would be interesting to hear of their experiences.



White-breasted Nuthatch

Nuthatches

By Louise Hallberg

One morning two little white-breasted nuthatches were enjoying sunflower seeds on the deck ledge ahead of the squirrels. Their voice is a constant of one low nasal note such as “yank, yank, yank.” Last year they nested high up in the nest box on the persimmon tree in front of the house. They line the nest with hairs and plant fibers in the hole of a dead tree. Five to seven eggs are laid with reddish-brown spots at the larger end.

The nuthatches are amazing acrobats, hanging from the topmost tree branches, running along the underside of horizontal limbs or descending the tree trunk head-foremost. They are able to use any part of the tree because they have very curved claws and sharp little hooks that catch in any crack. They can move upward, downward or sideways with amazing speed, and stretch their bodies away from their feet at odd angles. The top of the head is black, the sides of the head pure white which extends back along the back of the neck and merging into the white chin, throat, breast and belly, its back and middle tail feathers gray with the outer tail feathers black with white spots. The bill is longer than the head. Their long bills can penetrate into thick bark or old wood to get insects like no other birds except the woodpecker or brown creeper. Such a useful and interesting little acrobat.

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Sunday

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Louise Hallberg,
Sonoma County's
Butterfly Lady

Butterfly "No Release" Policy

Many school children visiting the Gardens have seen the miracle of a butterfly hatching or emerging from the chrysalis made by a caterpillar. At the Gardens we hope the children can see adult, egg, caterpillar and chrysalis form of the Pipevine Swallowtail. The caterpillars grow large eating their natural food plant, the Dutchman's pipevine.

The Painted Lady species is often purchased from commercial growers as caterpillars that feed on material that is provided. Some children in the past have raised painted lady butterflies at home and enjoyed releasing them here in the Gardens. We recently learned that butterfly authorities discourage this practice. There are no regulations over commercial growers and caterpillar providers. Diseases could be carried to the local populations of insects. We are not now allowing butterfly releases in the Gardens and will not honor future requests. We are pleased children learn about wildlife in school and hope they benefit seeing our Gardens in the natural setting.