



Fred and Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming

March 1 – April 30, 2021

Teacher Packet

The annual Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming exhibition at Meijer Gardens is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation. Tropical butterflies from around the world fly freely in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory every March and April. Explore this packet and discover ways to enhance your visit onsite and to deepen the learning in your classroom before and after your visit.

Into the Glass House

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is proud to welcome the 26th year of the *Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming*. This year, over 60 species of butterflies from Asia, Africa, and Central & South America, will take flight in the warm, lush environment of the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

The 19th century was an era of discovery. This year's theme will highlight horticulture displays, butterflies, moths and caterpillars in and under glass. Offering a look into the history of how Dr. Nathaniel Ward pursued a discovery of keeping plants in miniature green houses, which he named fern houses, and which are now known as Wardian cases or terrariums. This year learn more about the Wardian case and terrariums from miniature to five stories tall.

Main Concepts

- The life cycles of butterflies and moths include four stages: egg, caterpillar, pupa (chrysalis for butterflies, cocoon for moths), and adult.
- Butterflies and moths are found in habitats all over the world. They inhabit every continent except Antarctica.
- Each butterfly species has a distinctive flight pattern – from hovering to soaring.
- Wing colors, patterns and shapes help butterflies survive in a variety of ways.

Relevant Standards

Michigan Next Generation Science Standards:

- 1-LS3-1 Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits
- 3-LS4-2 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity
- 3-LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms
- MS-LS4 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Exhibition Highlights



Caterpillar Room

Try to spot the stages of the butterfly life cycle in our Caterpillar room. Milkweed plants in this room play host to monarch caterpillars and chrysalids. Try to spot them as you learn about the monarch's cycle from egg to butterfly.



Wardian Case

This world-changing invention made it possible in the 19th century to transport plants all over the world. Learn about the history of these fascinating cases and the role they played in an era of discovery and exploration.



Observation Station

See an incredible variety of butterfly chrysalids -- some large and camouflaged like leaves, some small and shiny as jewels. If you're lucky, you might even get to see our horticulturalists unpack newly shipped chrysalids or witness a butterfly emerging.



Feeding and Release Stations

Observe butterfly behaviors at feeding stations throughout the Tropical Conservatory. Or see how many species you can spot taking flight from our release cases.

Tips for Your Visit

Enjoy the Butterflies with Your Eyes

Butterflies' wings are made up of thousands of tiny scales and can be damaged if touched. Encourage students to enjoy butterflies with their eyes and not to try to touch or capture butterflies.

Dress Cool

During this exhibition, our Tropical Conservatory is 85 degrees and 70% humidity. Coat rooms are available as you enter our Welcome Center. Plan to dress lightly or in layers to avoid the heat.

Bring Water

Our water fountains are currently closed due to COVID-19 precautions. Water bottles may be brought inside our conservatories. Bring some with you!

Make an Eating Plan

Our Meijer-Shedleski Picnic Pavilion is available on a first-come, first-served basis and seats around 200. Restrooms are also located in this area.

Indoor public eating space may be limited. Lunchroom rentals may be available upon request. Please email fieldtrips@meijergardens.org to inquire about indoor eating options.

Explore the Lena Meijer Children's Garden

This garden fosters experiential learning and the use of all five senses. Explore the Butterfly Maze, touch and smell plants in the Kid's Sense Garden or dig for fossils in the Rock Quarry. Check with the Children's Garden Information Center for interactive programming that may be happening during your visit.

Free Self-guided Activity Sheets



[Butterflies Are Blooming Field Journals](#)

Observe, record, sketch and wonder with this guided field journal. This activity encourages students to ask questions about the unique behaviors and species they see and to sketch their observations.

Copies of this activity are available on request.

[Why These Wings Activity Sheet](#)

Why do butterflies' wings have bright colors and intricate patterns? Use this activity sheet to explore Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming and think critically about why butterflies have unique markings.

[Download and print this activity](#), or request copies for your group in advance of your visit.

[Life Cycle Wheels](#)

Take a journey through the life cycle of a butterfly. Learn about the different stages of metamorphosis with this fun activity. Print, assemble and bring it along for your visit to Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming at Meijer Gardens. Show what you've learned to your friends and family!

[Download and print this activity.](#)

[Weird and Wild Plants Around the World Activity Sheet](#)

As you explore our indoor plant conservatories, use this guide to examine interesting plant features and adaptations and make some discoveries of your own.

[Download and print this activity](#), or request copies for your group in advance of your visit.

Extension Resources for Your Classroom



Contribute to Community Science

[Monarch Joint Venture](#)

Explore data tracking monarch health and migration and discover how you and your students can participate in butterfly monitoring programs. This website includes a wealth of resources to help students understand how scientists work with citizens to track monarch health, as well as information about general butterfly monitoring programs.

[iNaturalist](#)

Use iNaturalist to contribute to community science with your students. Contribute to a specific project or share observations from right outside your door. Observations are shared with data repositories to contribute to biodiversity science. Every observation helps – from a rare butterfly to a common weed. This [teacher's guide](#) can get you started.

Learn About Michigan Butterflies and Host Plants

[Use this site](#) to see the more than 700 species of butterflies and moths that have been recorded in Michigan. Explore photos or submit your own sightings to the Butterflies and Moths of North America database.

Butterflies rely on specific host plants to lay eggs and provide food for caterpillars. Discover the host plants for Michigan native butterflies [here](#).