

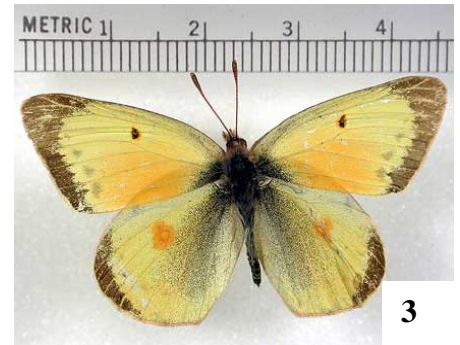
# BUTTERFLYING IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS

By Joann Karges

Frequently I am asked: “Where’s the best place to look for butterflies in this area?” My answer is, of course, the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. Other questions may follow: where exactly? when? how? “Butterflying” has become an accepted noun for the activity of butterfly-watching (as “birding” has become for bird-watching.) It has also become one of the fastest-growing outdoor hobbies throughout the country. An inexpensive hobby, butterflying has much to offer: the aesthetic appreciation of butterflies and the flowers they frequent, the experience of being outdoors, and the mental stimulation of learning to identify the species of butterflies. Not a strenuous activity, as a leisurely pace is best, the hobby may be enjoyed by all ages from very young children to the elderly.

How to begin? A pair of close-focusing binoculars is most desirable, and recently rather inexpensive binoculars have appeared on the market. A field guide small enough to carry in a pocket, purse, or waist-pack and excellent for beginners is the Golden Guide Butterflies and Moths, by Robert Mitchell and Herbert S. Zim. As one advances, one may want to upgrade to Jim Brock and Kenn Kaufman’s Butterflies of North America.

When? In our area any day of the year when the sun is out or at least it is “cloudy bright” and the temperature is above 60°. Even in the colder months, one can find butterflies nectaring on the winter honeysuckle in front of the Gardens Restaurant or by the cactus greenhouse or on trails by the ponds: Red Admirals (1), Painted Ladies (2), Orange Sulphurs (3), maybe an American Snout (4) or a Questionmark (5). Some of these will also visit the many pansy beds throughout the Gardens. Activity picks up considerably in March and April when redbud and Mexican plum and some salvias begin blooming. A few Monarchs (6) will arrive from the south—maybe one that overwintered in Mexico!



Note: For these and other photos of local butterflies by Dale Clark, visit [www.dallasbutterflies.com](http://www.dallasbutterflies.com)

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