



*Washington Butterfly Association*

# G'n<sup>u</sup>m\*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103

[www.naba.org/chapters/nabaws](http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaws)

\*G'n<sup>u</sup>m is the official greeting of WBA. It is derived from the name of common Washington butterfly food plants, of the genus *Eriogonum*.

## WBA Meeting Programs

WBA meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. They are held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle) and begin at 7:00 p.m. The first fifteen minutes are used for social reception and viewing of displays.

### November 7

“Looking ‘outside the box’ or net, as the case may be”

Washington state *Senator Ken Jacobsen* will explore several directions with WBA: A possible state butterfly, our role in ecotourism and also respond to any questions on environmental issues related to butterfly conservation. Come with your questions as this will be an excellent opportunity for open discussions on issues of concern.

### December 5

“Swallowtail Seasons: the First Butterfly Big Year”

*Dr. Robert Pyle*, with always something fun and interesting, will present his plan for a butterfly “big year” as he outlines his travels to find as many species as he can within the year. We will see many of the butterflies occurring in other states and be able to follow Bob as he shares seasons and locations to see them. This is the beginning of what will no doubt take on future challengers. You’ll see it here first!

### January

Winter Potluck Party including a white elephant gift exchange. Lots of fun and a chance to “re-gift!”  
Details later.

**February 6** – To be announced

**March 5** – To be announced.

### April 2

“Identification and Biology of the Immature Stages of Greater Fritillaries”

*Dr. David James*, from the WSU Dept. of Entomology, will take us through the fascinating development of greater fritillaries. This complex process had for many years been a mystery to scientists. He will present images of eggs, larvae, and pupae of Washington’s *Speyeria* spp. and also information on rearing and their defensive secretions. Much of this information will also be included in the book which he and Dave Nunnallee are co-authoring.

**Butterflies and Kids** -- I've wondered how WBA can engage more youngsters, especially in this age of competition with 24/7 entertainment. A few youngsters show up at our meetings and (despite the long drives) on our field trips, which is great. Perhaps our table at the Burke Museum's Bug Blast on September 9 helped us a bit. Quite a few of the very young kids were drawn by our looping video showing lots of fluttering butterflies. Many older kids spent a good deal of time with our butterfly board (see photo), matching butterflies and their larvae.

Most youngsters are fascinated by living creatures, and our ability to "get up close and personal" to some of them without inflicting any injuries seems a "natural" in its appeal. A few months ago when a western tiger swallowtail landed in the yard, I used our 4-year-old's "critter net" to capture it, and he was enormously excited to keep it until Daddy got home. (This species is great to show really young kids, since the stripes suggest "tiger" and the tails suggest "swallowtail.") Since then, his parents bought him a packaged "butterfly garden" that will provide painted lady caterpillars to watch through pupation and emergence.

As always,

Thanks,

Al Wagar  
WBA President



## WBA Mission Statement

The Washington Butterfly Association is devoted to scientific understanding and enjoyment of butterflies and their ecology through conservation and education.



## Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden

The groundbreaking for Seattle's Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden was held on August 11. After a walking tour, people got to work readying the site for fall plantings. The next work party will be held in November.

In order to spread the message of butterfly conservation to the greater public, the Washington Butterfly Association is taking up a butterfly gardening and restoration project at Magnuson Park in Seattle. With help from the Magnuson Environmental Stewardship Alliance (MESA), the Washington Butterfly Association will take on the restoration of Magnuson Park from fields of invasive plants to a thriving park full of wildlife. MESA already has many people helping for birds and native plants, and here we enter to help the butterflies.

To volunteer for the next work party or for more information, contact David Droppers

**Directions to the site:** Enter Magnuson Park on Sand Point Way at NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street. Drive until you get to the parking lot south of 65<sup>th</sup> near Lake Washington at Promontory Point. The garden site is up the hill above the demonstration gardens.



Surveying the site



Moving Dirt

Cutting Back Blackberry Vines





The brushfoots (Family Nymphalidae) constitute a very large worldwide family of butterflies characterized by species with only four legs, the front pair of the normal six legs being reduced to short brushlike appendages held close under the head. The “true brushfoots” are placed in the subfamily Nymphalinae and in our area include the genera *Polygonia* (Anglewings), *Nymphalis* (Tortoiseshells) and *Vanessa* (Ladies). Admirals are sometimes lumped with the true brushfoots, but they belong to a different subfamily. The Mourning Cloak’s closest relatives include the California Tortoiseshell (*N. californica*), Compton’s Tortoiseshell (*N. vau-album*) and Milbert’s Tortoiseshell (*N. milberti*), although the last two are often placed in other genera, *Roddia* and *Aglais* respectively. Most of the true brushfoots have a mostly orange dorsal surface, although *N. antiopa* is rich dark brown dorsally.

Adults hibernate over the winter and as a result have a very long adult life span. The reported flight period for *Nymphalis antiopa* in Washington is early February through early October but individuals could be seen at any time in the winter during any unseasonably warm weather period. The current year’s brood may be on the wing as early as mid May and will fly until winter. R.M. Pyle describes the range of this species as “Alaska to Venezuela, Lapland and Siberia to Spain and China.” This species is called the Camberwell Beauty where it occurs in England. In Washington the Mourning Cloak is quite common and occurs throughout all parts of the State except the westernmost maritime parts of the Olympic Peninsula.

Mourning Cloaks become active with the earliest sunny days of spring and congregations of overwintered adults can often be found on certain favored trees, typically willows, long before any fresh spring leaves begin to appear. Mating apparently takes place as soon as conditions are suitable. Oviposition has been observed as early as April 6 at low elevations in eastern Washington and larvae have been found in the wild as late as August 23 in higher elevations, a time span of nearly five months

when immatures occur in the wild although the species is single brooded here. The preferred larval food plants in Washington include a variety of willows, particularly Coyote Willow (*Salix exigua*), Scouler’s Willow (*S. scouleriana*) and Sitka Willow (*S. sitchensis*), although poplar, aspen, cottonwood, elm, rose, hackberry, hawthorn, birch, spiraea, alder, maple and apple have also been recorded. Females oviposit near the tips of branches of food plants. In one instance a female was observed ovipositing for 45 minutes on a Coyote Willow, placing her eggs 7 inches from the tip of a branch which was about 2mm in diameter at that point. Rotating very slowly around the twig she placed 180 eggs in neat diagonal rows, creating a complete sleeve of eggs around the twig. The willow was in bud but without leaves at the time. The eggs hatch about 9 days later, and larval growth is rapid. In captivity the larvae developed to final instars in just two weeks. The larvae are highly gregarious, feeding and moving in groups throughout development if food plant allows, wandering if not. The larvae surround themselves with strands of silk in a kind of loose nest for the first three instars, each larva being tied to the group with a single strand. They feed heavily and a large clutch of larvae can completely defoliate a medium-sized willow tree. The larvae become very large, almost two inches in length, and are grey and black with black branched spines and a bright orange dorsal spot on each segment. The pseudopods are bright orange as well. The hanging pupa is dull grayish in color and is angular and spiny. The adults eclose about ten days after pupation.

Adult Mourning Cloaks are unmistakable, no other butterfly appearing similar to them. The wings are a rich reddish brown on the dorsal surface, bordered on the outside with a row of bright metallic blue spots set in a black band. Beyond that band is a second broad band, this one marginal and bright gold in color. Ventrally the wings are dark gray and cryptic to match wood or bark on which they often roost.

## Board Members

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Al Wagar          | President          |
| Robin Lewis       | Vice President     |
| Donna Schaeffer   | Secretary          |
| Jennifer Kauffman | Treasurer          |
| Maureen Traxler   | Past-President     |
| Jon Pelham        | Science Advisor    |
| Richard Youel     | At-Large           |
| David Droppers    | At-Large           |
| Carolyn Heberlein | Newsletter/Website |

## Committees

|                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Marty Hanson         | Membership        |
| Joyce Bergen         | Annual Conference |
| Bob Hardwick         | Research Projects |
| David & Jo Nunnallee | Field Trips       |
| Idie Ulsh            | Programs          |

## Membership Application

**<https://wabutterflyassoc.org/membership/>**