

BUTTERFLY FESTIVALS

Vladimir Kachan, Belarus

Pacific Grove, California

Every October, during their migration to warmer climates, thousands of butterflies make a stop in a Pacific Grove, California eucalyptus grove, the preferred habitat of the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). The butterflies hang in clusters from eucalyptus branches in order to maintain their body temperature, and the resulting effect is stunning.

Visitors come from miles around to take Monarch butterfly tours throughout the sanctuary. The City of Pacific Grove created the butterfly sanctuary to preserve both this Monarch butterfly habitat and the opportunity to view the incredible natural display. The sanctuary is free, and visitors are invited to visit, watch, admire, and take Monarch butterfly photos and videos, so long as they do not touch. Monarchs stay in the Monarch butterfly grove from October until February, when they continue their migration south.

An estimated 25,000 Monarchs “overwinter” in Pacific Grove, known locally as “**Butterfly Town, U.S.A.**” The delicate orange and black creatures need some pretty specific conditions to survive autumn—the climate cannot be too hot and it cannot be too cold. Pacific Grove strikes the balance the Monarchs need to survive and thrive.

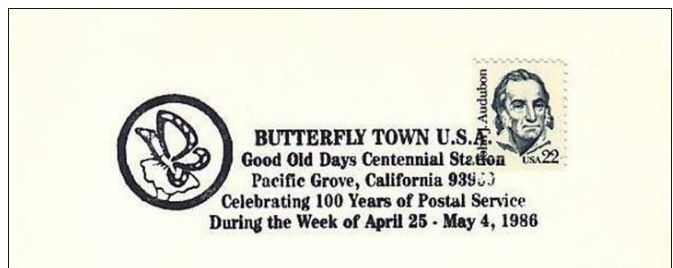


Butterfly Town USA meter

Pacific Grove’s annual Butterfly Parade, a tradition that goes back almost three-quarters of a century, is held on the third Saturday of every October. The Butterfly Parade, as well as the Butterfly Bazaar that follows, celebrates the return of the Monarch butterfly to Pacific Grove, the beautiful insects’ annual wintering stop.



Butterfly Parade slogan cancel



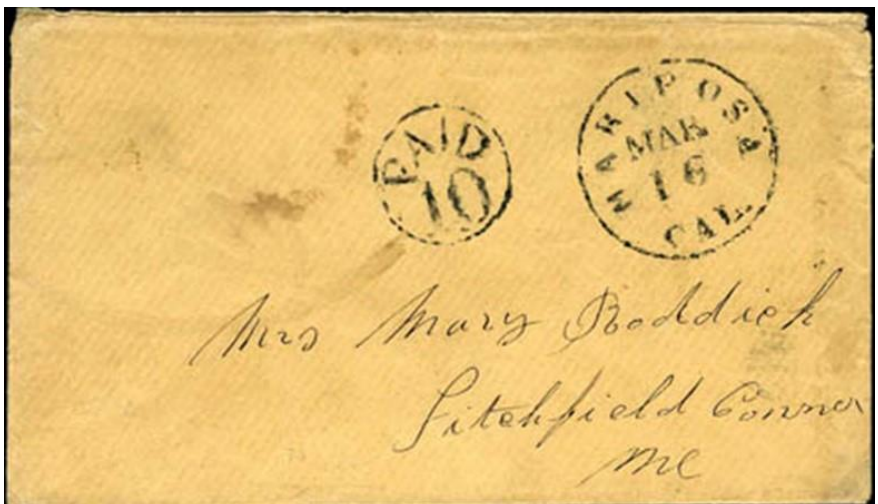
Butterfly Town U.S.A. slogan cancel

This parade, which first took place in 1939, attracts people from both near and far to view the adorable children in their cute costumes. A Butterfly Bazaar follows after the parade. This great event is a historical tradition in the City of Pacific Grove.

Mariposa, California

The town of Mariposa, California celebrates its namesake at the town’s Annual Butterfly Festival.

The poetic name *Mariposa*, Spanish for “butterfly,” was first applied in this region by members of the Moraga Expedition, to a small stream at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The party had left the Mission San Juan Bautista on 21 September 1806, on an expedition to locate suitable sites for a proposed string of inland missions to parallel those located along the coast.



1858 stampless cover from Mariposa, California

Led by Alfréz Gabriel Moraga, the 25 men crossed the San Joaquin River on September 27th and during that afternoon encountered “myriads of butterflies, of the most gorgeous colors, perched about on surrounding trees.”

Camping that evening not far from the river the chaplain and diarist of the expedition, a Franciscan priest named Father Pedro Muñoz, made this entry for 27 September 1806:

“This place is called the Mariposas because of the great multitudes of these, especially at night and in the morning, could not be more troublesome. Their eagerness to hide from the rays of the sun reaching such proportions that they pursued us everywhere, so much that one got into the ear of one of the expedition leaders, causing him great discomfort and not a little effort to extract it.”

El Arroyo de Las Mariposas was only the beginning. The name would later be given to a thriving mining camp, one of California’s original twenty-seven counties, a lily, a song about a lily, and a sparkling white quartz rock veined in green ore, known as mariposite.

The Mariposa Butterfly Festival is a three day event that takes place in the town of Mariposa. There are many activities that take place throughout the weekend that attract thousands of people to the festival. The highlights are always the butterfly releases over the Mariposa Creek and the parade.

Prior to the annual festival, butterflies are raised in local classrooms to educate children on the life cycle of the butterfly as well as learn about the local butterfly’s habitat and needs. These butterflies are then released at the festival, much to the delight of the children as well as adults.

Anganguero, Michoacán

In February, Anganguero town in Mexico celebrates its Monarch Butterfly Festival. This festival began in 1992, to promote awareness of the butterfly habitat, take advantage of the ecotourism it offers, and promote the culture and arts of the area. The festival includes events related to food, music, dance, and exhibitions of arts, crafts, and more. This annual one-week long cultural Monarch Butterfly Festival is a very popular time to visit.

The monarch butterfly is noted for its lengthy annual migration. It is the only butterfly species known to make annual north-south migrations like many bird species do. They spend the winter in the forests of pine and oyamel fir (*Abies religiosa*) in central Mexico, along the border of the states of Michoacán and México. These butterflies spend about five months in this area of Mexico, arriving in October and leaving in March.



Danaus plexippus
Mexico, 1988, Sc#1559–62

It is estimated that anywhere from 60 million to a billion butterflies arrive to the central Mexican highlands every winter, mostly assembling in this small area. These butterflies congregate into colonies, clustering onto the pine and oyamel trees. In many cases, they are so thick that the trees turn orange in color and branches sag from their weight. When these butterflies take flight for mating purposes, they can fill the sky and appear like clouds and the beating of their collective wings has been compared to the sound of light rain.

Yangmingshan, Taiwan

The annual Yangmingshan Butterfly Festival on Taiwan kicks off at the beginning of May in Yangmingshan National Park, giving the public a chance to admire the beauty of the more than 180 species of butterflies that reside in the mountains there during the rainy season, which runs through July. There is also a two-day festival, organized by the Butterfly Conservation Society, held this year in the park on 9–10 June. The military road to Bamboo Mountain, which is normally off-limits to the public, was open for butterfly watching. The Butterfly Corridor—a sheltered 3.2 km path winding through the park—also provides a great location to spot butterflies. Other activities include butterfly photo exhibits, lectures on butterflies, and guided tours.



Graphium agamemnon
Taiwan, 2009, Sc#3872c

Hampyeong, South Korea

An estimated 1.3 million people visited the Hampyeong World Butterfly and Insect Expo held in South Korea for 45 days from 18 April to 1 June 2008. During the festival, about 120,000 butterflies were released over flower gardens spread over an area of one million square meters, creating an atmosphere that enabled visitors to relax and mingle with nature.

The nation’s premier nature and environment festival and the world’s first-ever environmental festival themed on butterflies, insects, and nature created a land of fantasy as tens of thousands of butterflies and elegant floral scents captivated visitors.

In 2008, the festival carried a more significant meaning than ever as the 2007 International Congress of Entomology formally recognized the expo as the first event in the world to promote awareness of insects and related studies. This enabled the expo to become a gathering of world-class scholars and experts in this field, who exchanged views and data about insects and their impact on the ecology of the world.

An exhibit of more than 28,000 mounted specimens of butterflies and other insects was prepared at the General Ecology Experience Hall, which housed the Butterfly Ecology Hall, where one could learn all about butterflies.

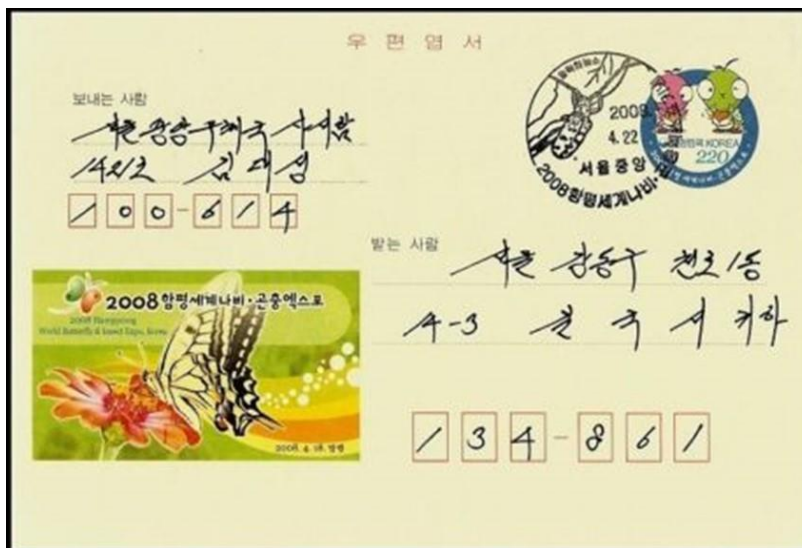
The first Hampyeong Butterfly festival took place in 1999, offering visitors the opportunity to absorb knowledge on the butterflies of the region. During the annual festival period, the whole town of Hampyeong is a “veritable butterfly town,” covered with butterfly-themed lights and decorations. Hampyeong Butterfly Festival themed with live butterflies and insects is one of the representative festivals in South Korea.

Cincinnati, Ohio

The annual International Butterfly Show held in the Krohn Conservatory in Cincinnati, Ohio, features a different theme each year. The theme for 2016 is “Butterflies of the Caribbean.” The 2012 show with the theme, “On Wings of Harmony” took place from 21 April to 24 June 2012.

“On Wings of Harmony” featured thousands of vibrant, colorful butterflies that arrived in Cincinnati from every continent on Earth (with the exception of Antarctica). They flew in free flight throughout the showroom, often fluttering together through the ribs of a 10-foot recycled aluminum globe.

Students enjoyed walking among hundreds of butterflies, most of which were in free flight for the first time in show history. Tropical flowers of all kinds provided food and shelter, as well as an enchanting, multi-colored backdrop for the butterflies fluttering around the Conservatory’s show room. Visitors of all ages also delighted in observing butterfly behavior—flight, feeding, basking, courtship—and experiencing their fascinating life cycle at close range in the “Butterfly Nursery.”



Papilio xuthus
Hampyeong Expo stationery card, South Korea, 2008



Butterfly Nursery (*Idea leuconoe*)