

## The Gloworm

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The weather in the last few days has really gotten the juices flowing both for folks like me and for insects. I saw my first butterflies in the wild during the spring vacation last week. They were scavenging for flowers and green plants already laying eggs, I suspect.

So it is time to at least begin to think about gardens and bug chasing activities. We're also beginning to consider what we'll do at camp in June and in July. A number of you have requested more information on the camp sessions as we see them coming this year, so I thought I'd take a paragraph or two to bring you up to date.

Camp #1 - Wood College near Mathiston (about 20 miles west of Starkville) is the location chosen and I think it will be an outstanding site. We will be staying in AIR CONDITIONED dormitories but the setting is still pretty 'buggy.' Wood College has farmland, which is no longer farmed, so it has many collecting habitats including ponds and streams, wood-lots and open areas. We anticipate some great catches both on the black light sheets and during the daytime. There are a number of potential butterfly havens to explore and that is something we do not always see with the State Park camps. I think this would be an outstanding camp for 1<sup>st</sup> time campers and will also provide some interesting new habitats for the old timers. Since we are close to MSU we can anticipate some visiting lecturers and new faces. We'll share some pictures in future *Gloworm* editions. (I also heard a rumor that one of the dorms was haunted.) Mark June 8-12 on your calendar and join us.

Camp#2 Leroy Percy Park is near Hollandale, in the middle of the South Delta and it should prove to be a great, but different camp. The habitat in the delta is different and we should see some unique species of critters. I can almost guarantee 4 to 5 species of dragonflies for day time capture. Campers also need to be warned to expect MOSQUITOES from dusk until dawn but we can hopefully see some other night creatures come to blacklights. Since we are near a national forest we should be able to collect some beetles and good Lepidoptera, as well. We'll try to get some additional pictures of this area prior to camp, as well. They have a nice lake, inhabited by alligators. Mark your calendar for July 20-24. This camp is limited to 40 people total.

Happy Bugging,

Michael R. Williams  
Extension Entomologist

## Building a Butterfly Garden

Butterflies are a treasure, which can be developed. Most butterflies feed on nectar from flowers. Some plants are particularly attractive to certain species. Other plants are also attractive for egg laying and larval production. The caterpillar stages developing on larval hosts in the butterfly garden mean that the butterflies will be around much longer during the year. Plants like parsley, dill and other garden herb plants often attract butterflies like the swallowtail for egg deposition. Records of insect presence in which stages enable the gardener to improve his 'butterfly garden.' A 4-Her might combine this project with horticulture or photography.

1. Plant a mixed assortment of flowering plants - in general most plants, which flower throughout the summer are preferred over those which flower for only a short time. Zinnias are a great annual 'butterfly' plant.
2. Provide larval food plants as well as those designed to attract flying butterflies. Dill, fennel, parsley, maypop and hollyhock and other herb plants are often good larval hosts.
3. Let the weeds grow - native plants attract native species of butterflies. A small native plant (weed) patch is ideal for all stages of butterflies and other arthropods.
4. Create mud holes, for puddle clubs. Provide basking areas, i.e. flat rocks in sunny areas near a small pond. Butterflies require minerals (salts) and the best way of getting them is from damp soil.
5. Build hibernation sites. A pile of brush or logs crisscrossed 3' (H) X 3' (W) X 6' (L) covered with plastic placed near flowers will provide a roosting and hibernation area.
6. Build feeders: Provide rotting fruit, such as bananas and apples (or peach peels etc. in season) or sugar water for the insects to 'nectar'. Watermelon rinds and cantaloupe peels are also attractive to butterflies.
7. Avoid using pesticides in the garden.
8. Many of the larger trees are larval hosts. (Identify the large trees near you, then plant flowering plants, which are attractive to those butterflies).

Two reference sources for the butterfly gardener - Ortho books - **Hummingbirds and Butterflies** and Matthew Tekulsky's **The Butterfly Garden**. These are essential to understanding host plants and to good garden design.