



**PLEASE LOOK DOWN ALSO** – Our butterflies often sit on the path. If you don't take care you will stand on them!



**UNEVEN PATH** – Please watch your step



**BUTTERFLY NECTAR FEEDING STATION.** Butterflies need to drink nectar every 30 minutes or so. As a flower only replenishes nectar at night, we would need approximately 36,000 flowers blooming every day to feed out 1500+ butterflies naturally.



Butterflies are attracted to flowers because of the colour of the petals, and if they land on you it may be because they think you might be a flower. The colour of our feeder lids mimics the colour of a flower. Our butterfly nectar is a special mix of water, sugar for energy, and vitamins and minerals.



This way to our caterpillar nursery (breeding laboratory)



**BUTTERFLY NURSERY AREA – PLEASE DO NOT USE THE FLASH SETTING ON YOUR CAMERA.** We do not let our butterflies emerge in the main aviary as they need time to pump up their wings and dry them out before being approached by other butterflies. Because female butterflies only mate once in their life, newly emerged female butterflies are extremely popular with the male butterflies! We release them into the main aviary every afternoon. The release today in the main aviary is scheduled for.....



All caterpillars spin silk, but the silk spun by these caterpillars (also known as “silkworms”) is special because it is one continuous thread between 600 to 900 metres long. In order to make one strand of silk 4 to 8 of these silk threads have to be twisted together.



**PUSH** The black button & listen! This is a recording, taken very early in the morning, inside our laboratory. You are listening to the sound of 4,000+ caterpillars eating.



Butterfly eggs are collected five times per day and chemically washed. They are then housed in dated Petri dishes which are cleaned daily. Fresh sterilized food plant leaves are also added to the dishes daily. Eventually, the caterpillars outgrow these dishes and are transferred to larger containers. The dates on the Petri dishes identifies the date the eggs were laid.



This way to our Birdwing and Orchard nursery and back to the live butterfly exhibit



**STERILIZATION AREA.** All our food plants for our caterpillars are immersed in a sterilizing solution in order to kill any virus or other contaminants that may harm our caterpillars. If we did not do this we would expect the same success rate as in the wild – out of every 100 eggs we collect, only 1 or 2 would make it to become butterflies. Because we keep our caterpillar nursery area so sterile, we achieve an 80 to 90% success rate.



Slide the box that the butterfly specimens are placed in to see the different parts of the butterflies.

Notice how the wings are made up of individual scales.

Butterfly feet have tiny hooks that help them to grasp slippery surfaces  
A butterfly has multi-faceted eyes that give them almost 360 degree vision



**ORCHARD BUTTERFLY** emerging area. Our butterflies all need time to pump up and then dry their wings before they are ready to fly. This takes up to 4 hours. We only release our butterflies into the main aviary when they are fully capable of flying. The reason? We want to make sure all our female butterflies are fully able to exercise choice in their pick for a male butterfly to mate with. If she can't fly she will be forced to mate with the first male butterfly that finds her.



**Shhhhhh!** Cairns Birdwing and Orchard butterflies are emerging from their chrysalises. Please do not disturb. Please do not use flash when taking a photo.



Butterflies feed via a long “tongue” called a proboscis that is usually neatly curled up when not in use. The butterfly places the proboscis into the nectar and pumps the fluid up. Can you see the butterflies unfurling their proboscis?



Female butterflies only mate once in their lives. Birdwing butterflies will mate for anything between 8 to 14 hours, and are often found hanging off this fig tree. The female will be the one that is right way up; the male hangs off her upside down.



Butterflies will only lay their eggs on the specific plant for that species. The aristolochia vine is the food plant for the Cairns Birdwing butterfly. The brown female Cairns Birdwing will carefully lay her eggs under the leaves of this plant and the caterpillar will hatch out in a matter of days and begin eating. Aristolochia tagala is a poisonous plant and, as a result of eating this vine, the caterpillar becomes poisonous for birds to eat. The Cairns Birdwing caterpillar and butterfly displays warning colours to announce that it is not edible.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

The life expectancy of:

- Ulysses Butterfly 10 to 15 days
- Cairns Birdwing 4 to 6 weeks
- Monarch Butterfly up to a year
- Common Eggfly 2 to 3 weeks
- Australian Lurcher up to 9 months



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**HERCULES MOTH.** This is a real gentle giant. It is the world’s largest moth and is found locally in Far North Queensland. The Hercules has no mouth parts, so does not eat. It lives for only a few days after emerging from its cocoon, and lives off its body fats. According to the Guinness Book of Records, the largest Hercules ever caught was a female taken at Innisfail. This huge specimen had an incredible wingspan of 360mm or 14 inches! The photo here is shown ACTUAL SIZE.

**EMPEROR GUM MOTH**

An Australian Classic. There would be very few Australians who have not heard of this iconic moth. Found in most parts of Australia, the caterpillars feed on eucalypt leaves. Then, when they pupate (enter their cocoon) they can stay sealed inside it for up to two years. They emerge only when the environmental conditions are favourable.

**BOGON MOTH.** Famous for its annual migrations. In 1998, these moths gave our politicians something else to talk about when huge numbers of these moths invaded the new Parliament House, They caused such havoc that the engineers had to totally redesign the building lighting and air intakes.

**ZODIAC MOTH.** Day flying moths are the exception, not the norm. But one thing they all share is a high degree of colour. The Zodiac Moth here is a native to Far North Queensland and mimics a butterfly in most ways. Like a butterfly, it has a proboscis so that it can sip nectar from flowers. In June and July huge numbers of Zodiac moths can be seen migrating across the Atherton Tablelands.

**Other Facts You Might Want To Know**

**Some of the differences between moths & butterflies are:**

- Butterflies** usually fly during the day, moths at night
- Butterflies** usually fold their wings up over their bodies while at rest. Moths fold their wings along the side or have them open.
- The antennae** of a butterfly ends in a small club, while the antennae of a moth is either fernlike or ends in a sharp point.
- A butterfly’s body** is usually thin in relation to the wings. A moth’s body is generally plump and large by comparison.

**We are independent and not government funded.**

**We are a company that is committed to environmentally sustainable work practices.**

**We appreciate feedback.**

**How can we improve? Has a staff member given exceptional service?**



**ENGLISH**

**INFORMATION SHEET**

**Welcome to the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary.**

You will notice that there is a lot of signage in our exhibit. While it is not possible to translate all of it into your language, we have translated the most informative signs. Each translated sign has a number, and the translation for that sign corresponds to the number on this information sheet.

This is a locally owned family business that has been giving visitors to the area the opportunity to experience being surrounded by up to 2,000 tropical butterflies since 1987. While our electric blue **ULYSSES** butterfly is the undisputed star of the display, we also have Australia’s largest butterfly, the multi-coloured **CAIRNS BIRDWING** flying in our rainforest flight aviary, as well as many other local rainforest species.

All our butterflies are hand raised, and very friendly. Don’t be surprised if they land on you – they will be checking to see if you are a flower. You will also be able to access a room that will let you see the colours you are wearing the way a butterfly sees them.

Please enjoy your visit.

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