

MISSOULA  
BUTTERFLY HOUSE  
AND INSECTARIUM

# SPRING

NEWSLETTER  2011



Students from the Missoula Community School meet Milton the millipede. Photo provided by Ronni Flannery.

Promoting an appreciation and understanding of insects and their relatives in the Animal Kingdom through public education and the development of an invertebrate education facility.



## The Buzz . . .

As spring is a busy time for insects, it's also a busy time for the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium. We are getting ready to take our bug ambassadors on the road visiting with the community at various festivals and events this summer (see below). We can't wait to introduce you to our new invertebrate friends. We're continuing to look for the perfect location to build our home and focusing on a workload that continues to grow.

## Upcoming Events

**Please join the Missoula Butterfly House and our bug ambassadors at the Neuro Network Club's 3rd annual Spring Hullabaloo!**

The Neuro Network Club is a social club for adults with autism/aspergers. But this social club does so much more. Their motto is "We are all about autism and altruism" and on April 23rd, they are hosting a fun event for the community while promoting awareness about autism. The club creates a carnival-like atmosphere with games for all ages including a life-size Candy Land Game. In addition, they are sponsoring an art auction during the event with proceeds going to the Missoula Butterfly House. Please join us for this free, fun,

Meanwhile, we are taking the time to enjoy the emergence of our insect neighbors. We'll keep you up to date on what we find and provide suggestions on Facebook of animals you can look for as spring gets underway. In this newsletter, learn about an important native pollinator and some insects that anglers should know about.

I hope you too are taking the time to slow down, enjoy spring and notice the little animals that run the world.

- Jen Marangelo -

family-friendly event and bid on art generously donated by community artists and businesses.

**When: April 23, 2011 from 1:00 - 3:00**  
**(art auction begins at 1:30)**

**Where: University Center Ballroom, UM Campus**

**Among other happenings, we will celebrate First Friday Gallery Night in May at Whippersnappers, have several visits this summer to Out to Lunch and Downtown ToNight in Caras Park, and have a booth at the Missoula County Fair.**

These are just some of the highlights so please visit our website or join us on Facebook for more details and to view a complete schedule.

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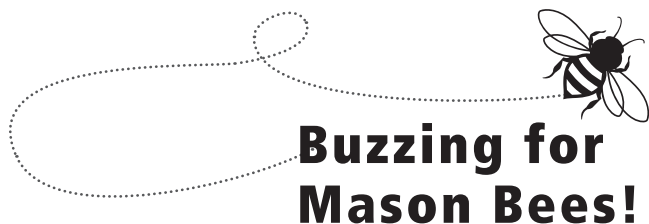
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**A special thank you to Shane Clouse for entertaining our guests at our "Let us Introduce Ourselves" event. Learn more about Shane and his music at [www.shaneclose.com](http://www.shaneclose.com).**

# MISSOULA BUTTERFLY HOUSE AND INSECTARIUM



## Buzzing for Mason Bees!

Each spring, around mid-April, Blue Orchard Mason Bees, *Osmia lignaria*, emerge from a long winter sleep. They spend the winter in tunnels made by beetles or woodpeckers or sometimes man-made holes like in a Mason Bee Motel. Males emerge a week or so before females. Half the size of females, males have longer antennae and sport a tuft of light colored hair on their faces. When the females emerge, males mate several times but soon die off leaving the females to do all the work. Both are a deep blue-green with a metallic sheen and are slightly larger than houseflies.

After mating, females find a hole approximately 5/16" in diameter. They pack in some pollen and nectar, back in, and lay an egg. Then, as their name implies, they build a mud wall sealing off the egg and its food stores in a small cell. The female packs in some more pollen and nectar, backs in, lays an egg, and builds a second mud wall. She packs, lays, and builds until the hole is full, seals it off, and starts on a new hole. After weeks of building and provisioning the next generation, the females die off as well. A single mason bee is capable of visiting and pollinating as many as 67,500 blossoms in her short six-week life span.

Inside the little cells, the eggs hatch and the larvae start chowing down on the pollen and nectar. They eat and grow and eat and grow and eat and grow! Late in the summer, the larvae spin cocoons where they become pupae and metamorphose into adult mason bees. The adults don't emerge just yet, however! They spend the winter inside the pupal case only to be seen again the next spring. You can find

them visiting early blooming flowers such as apples, cherries and even dandelions.

Mason bees are not only great pollinators, they are great tools to ask questions about pollinators and climate change in your own backyard! You can observe mason bees easily with nest blocks and patience. You can watch (and hear) the males and females emerge, record the dates, and watch the females fill the holes and lay their eggs. Mason bees won't sting you even if you stand right next to their nest. They may land on you, though!

The Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium would love to help you on your way to becoming a Backyard Bee-cologist. Contact us about Mason Bee Motels and Nest Observation Records. We're buzzing for mason bees!

- By John Holbrook and Alison Perkins -



Board member Alison Perkins and John Holbrook introduced orchard mason bees to students at Lewis and Clark school.

### Bee Safe!

Just the thought of bees can really scare some folks. Bees sting. Yes, but there's so much more to know about bees, and once you understand them, you probably won't get stung – ever!

Bees can be broadly classified as social nesting bees and solitary nesting bees. Honey bees and bumblebees are social bees – they share a nest, and they defend that nest. Rarely will a social bee sting you away from its nest, unless you handle it roughly or step on it. Near a nest, though, caution is the rule. Move slowly, don't wave your arms wildly, and maintain respect for the bees.

Most species of bees, like orchard mason bees, are solitary nesters, every female is fertile – there's no queen to protect, so stinging is rare. But solitary bees are just as important as social bees for pollination, and some would argue they are the best pollinators.

- By Alison Perkins -



Mason Bee Motel



Orchard Mason Bee

**DONATE TODAY!**

406.214.5036  
PO Box 8885 Missoula, MT 59807

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[www.missoulabutterflyhouse.org](http://www.missoulabutterflyhouse.org)

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**Betsy Vance**

## Giving Us Wings

While the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium has gained many friends and partners throughout the past year, the enthusiasm and support of one partner in particular has played a key role in getting our vision off the ground.

Within her own life and in those of others, Betsy Vance has seen the

transformational power of the natural world. The excitement and sheer joy that her classroom of school children experienced from an unexpected visit of dozens of butterflies; providing peace for a Marine struggling with the horror of Vietnam; or bearing perspective for a friend dealing with the physical and emotional wounds of cancer, Betsy recounts stories of how nature provides us with "teachable moments" if we take the opportunity and time to stop and observe.

Affected by how profound an impact nature can have in our lives, Betsy has made the preservation of our natural world a priority in her life. When presented with an opportunity to help the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium get off the

ground and share the amazing world of insects with others, she enthusiastically became a partner in our vision.

When asked what her least favorite six or eight-legged critter was, Betsy wasted no time in replying "spiders". Being a devoted observer of the natural world, Betsy admitted that while she is fascinated by insects, she is more drawn to a segment of animals of the four-legged to no-legged variety — namely lizards and snakes. "I love how they are so adaptable, with some species changing color to blend into their surroundings or developing the ability to lose a tail to avoid predation. There are many lessons we can learn by observing nature, like not worrying about the past and focusing on the present."

Betsy has not only helped the Butterfly House focus on the present, but plan for the future. She stepped forward to help us complete the business feasibility analysis that has provided the foundation for our vision, complete our non-profit tax exempt application, and recently hosted a gathering where we introduced the Butterfly House to new friends and partners. In these and other ways, Betsy's belief in our mission has truly given us wings.

From all of your two, six, and eight-legged friends at the Butterfly House, thank you for your enthusiasm and confidence.

- Glenn Marangelo -

## Betsy . . . we can't thank you enough!

## Catch the Hatch!

As spring gets underway in western Montana, the aquatic critters in our streams and rivers make some dramatic appearances.

**Skwala Stonefly:** Just as winter begins to fade, from mid March through April the Bitterroot and lower Clark Fork Rivers are a good bet to observe this 1 to 1.5 inch stonefly.

**March Brown Mayfly:** The first large mayfly of the season to emerge, you'll find March Browns from early April through mid May.

**Salmonfly:** At up to 3 inches in length with an orange abdomen, the salmonfly is hard to miss. While the timing of this epic hatch varies from river to river, you can observe these behemoths from late May into July on Montana's rivers. Rock Creek or the Big Hole River in early to mid June is a good bet.

**Your donation is tax-deductible!**

## We're exempt!

Last month the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium's 501(c)(3) non-profit application was approved. That means that your donations are tax-deductible.

We'd like to thank the Missoula Community Foundation for their help and support as our fiscal sponsor, enabling supporters to make tax-deductible donations to us throughout the past year.

**DONATE TODAY!**

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Photo provided by Ronni Flannery.

## Missoula Butterfly House visits the Missoula Community School

We'd like to thank Gerri Rose and the students at the Missoula Community School for inviting us to their classroom-dressed-up-as-a-tropical-rainforest. Milton the millipede and several Madagascan Hissing Cockroaches joined us to learn how to recognize insects from other invertebrates and ways different invertebrates protect themselves.

These insect-loving students are also raising money to donate to the Missoula Butterfly House. We can't thank you enough!



**Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium**

PO Box 8885

Missoula, MT 59807

## Help us take flight!



### Become a member!

For a donation of \$35 or more, you can become a member of the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium. Members will be kept up to date on our accomplishments and progress through periodic newsletters/updates as well as announcements of upcoming workshops and presentations.

### Please mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium

PO Box 8885

Missoula, MT 59807

### Tell a friend!

To make our vision a reality, we need your help in informing others about our mission and what we are bringing to our community. Please help by sharing our work with your friends and family.



### Follow us on facebook

Keep up to date on Butterfly House activities as well as local insect happenings, news and trivia. Please "like" or "share" our page with your friends to help us get our message out.