



## NEWS



### The Buzz Get the Champagne on Ice!

By Jen Marangelo, Executive Director

Summer 2023

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Jen in the new building, making sure final touches go as planned.



### Our Mission

The Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium inspires an appreciation and understanding of insects and their relatives.

### Become a Member!

We are so close to opening our doors! Get your membership today to enjoy free admission and other benefits.

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

It was the spring of 2003. I was headed to Seattle, WA for the first time and visiting the Pacific Science Center was one of the many things on my agenda.

It was also the first time I set foot in a tropical butterfly house. To say the experience had an impact on me is an understatement. The warmth and humidity that envelopes you. The earthy aroma of soil and the fragrance of tropical plants in bloom. And of course, the beautiful butterflies ...a natural artist's pallet of color right in front of you.

And then it dawned on me, "Maybe I could do something like this in Missoula?"

For the next 20 years, this seed of an idea took me on a long and very braided journey. Going back to school to get a master's degree in Museum Exhibit Design & Curriculum Development. Years of working as a volunteer to launch this organization and trying to gain some momentum. Opening and operating the Missoula Insectarium as the first tangible product of our mission. And embracing a partnership and a collaborative vision that would ultimately turn this long-term dream into reality.

We've come a long way, and the time is almost here. I'm thrilled to announce that the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium will (fingers-crossed) open in late-October!

From day one, there was a key change that needed to take place in order for this vision to begin moving forward. It needed to grow and turn into a dream shared by other community members. And indeed it did. Some of those dreamers have been with us since the very beginning. Many more climbed aboard our buggy train with each passing year. Together we mobilized a resounding "YES" that we could do this and that this was something our community was excited for.

My deepest thanks to everyone who's played a role in this success over the years. As the saying goes, it certainly "takes a village."

Are you ready, Missoula? I can't wait to welcome you through the doors of the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium! 🍾





# New Exhibit: Leafcutter Ants



With opening day quickly approaching, we're incredibly excited to welcome a host of new species that will be the stars of our exhibits. Of course, there's the butterflies in the butterfly house. But that's just the beginning. Our exhibits will showcase beetles, tarantulas, praying mantids, hermit crabs, millipedes, walking sticks, and so much more. But one of the new species we're most excited for is our leafcutter ant colony. Currently consisting of about 25,000 individual ants, the colony will eventually grow to about 250,000.

The exhibit will be divided into three sections: chambers to house the colony and their food; a middle section the foraging ants need to traverse; and a section where we provide leaves for the ants. With worker ants constantly bringing pieces of leaves, flowers, or other vegetation back to the colony, the exhibit will provide an amazing opportunity to observe these insects in action.

While you might guess that the ants feast on leaves, each piece brought back is cleaned, prepared and used as fertilizer to grow a highly nutritious fungus that powers the colony. Leafcutter ants are actually farmers that have perfected their skills for millions of years.

Our exhibit will allow you to observe this mega power's complex division of labor, with each colony member working together for the betterment of all. While the single queen will be hidden deep in the brood chamber, you'll observe three different sizes of worker ants, each with a specific job to do – jobs that are assigned by certain genes being turned on or off depending on the needs of colony's workforce.

There's so much more to learn about these incredible animals. You'll just need to visit to experience this unique exhibit, and many more, for yourself! 🐜

## Butterfly House Membership

Becoming a member of the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium opens your door to a world of wonder and discovery as you explore the incredible lives of the "The Little Things That Run the World" – E.O. Wilson. From tropical butterflies ...to walking sticks ...to arachnids that include tarantulas, scorpions, and more, the more you learn about the amazing animals that are part of our exhibits and programs, the more you'll appreciate the incredible lives and diversity of the arthropod species we share our planet with.

To learn more about becoming a member, and the benefits associated with each membership level, please visit our website at [missoulabutterflyhouse.org/membership/](https://missoulabutterflyhouse.org/membership/) or call us at 406-317-1211.



Photo by Max Hill.



Scan the QR code to learn more and become a member today!



# Visiting the Butterfly House: What to Expect



After working toward this dream for many years, we're incredibly excited to bring you an experience unlike anything Missoula has ever seen.

- Approximately 80 degrees and 80% humidity all year long, the butterfly house lets you enter a tropical paradise on any day. Filled with around 500 free-flying butterflies, you'll see beautiful species from around the world.
- In the insectarium exhibit area, you'll learn about a host of live arthropods that include species of insects, arachnids, millipedes, centipedes, and crustaceans. Themed exhibits and microscope stations will introduce you to species native to Montana, the magic of metamorphosis, insect sounds, the invaluable services arthropods provide, and more.
- At the Animal Encounter Area, sit down with our staff and volunteers for up-close and personal introductions to some incredible species, most of which you can touch and hold.
- Join us for a predator feeding demonstration to learn how tarantulas, scorpions, praying mantises or other predators capture and eat their prey.
- Got a kiddo, who's had enough stimulation? Sit down to read an insect-themed book or do a puzzle together in our children's corner.
- A variety of special programs will allow families and learners of all ages to take a deeper dive into the amazing lives of some of the species we share our planet with.
- With a classroom to comfortably accommodate any school group, we look forward to hosting classes for grade-specific programming and exploration.

These are just some of the experiences and learning opportunities our new facility will offer.

However, as much as we've planned for the type of experiences we want to provide, as we settle into this new mode of operations there are also some unknowns. One of them is the number of visitors.

Whether you're a member enjoying your free admission benefits or a one-time visitor, our goal is to provide you with the best experience possible. At certain times of the year and/or on particularly busy days (weekends, around the holidays, summer tourism, etc.), that may mean limiting the number of visitors at any given time through "timed ticket entry." To keep your plans on track, the best course of action will be to check our website and reserve (members) or purchase (non-members) admission tickets in advance.

The months ahead usher in a new era for our organization and the learning opportunities and experiences we are able to provide. We look forward to growing together in creating a unique destination for our schools, our community, and visitors to Missoula. 🦋

## Follow Us



@missoulabutterflyhouse

## MISSOULA BUTTERFLY HOUSE & INSECTARIUM STAFF

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**Carolyn Taber**  
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**Morgan McNeill**  
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**Glenn Marangelo**  
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**Stacy Carr-Poole**  
Operations Director

**Robert Taylor**  
Lead Horticulturist

**Miriam Bayer**  
Lead Animal Keeper





EXPLORING the little things that run the world.

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## Volunteers!

Do you have a passion for education or a love of all things buggy? We're looking for volunteers to help with a wide variety of jobs – from museum docents ...to animal care helpers ...to potential board members and everything in between. Join our team, support our unique education efforts and programs, and help provide a truly unique experience in our community. For more information or to fill out our volunteer form to get the ball rolling, please visit our website at [missoulabutterflyhouse.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://missoulabutterflyhouse.org/get-involved/volunteer).



Scan the QR code to  
learn more and sign up  
to volunteer with us!

### Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium Board of Directors

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