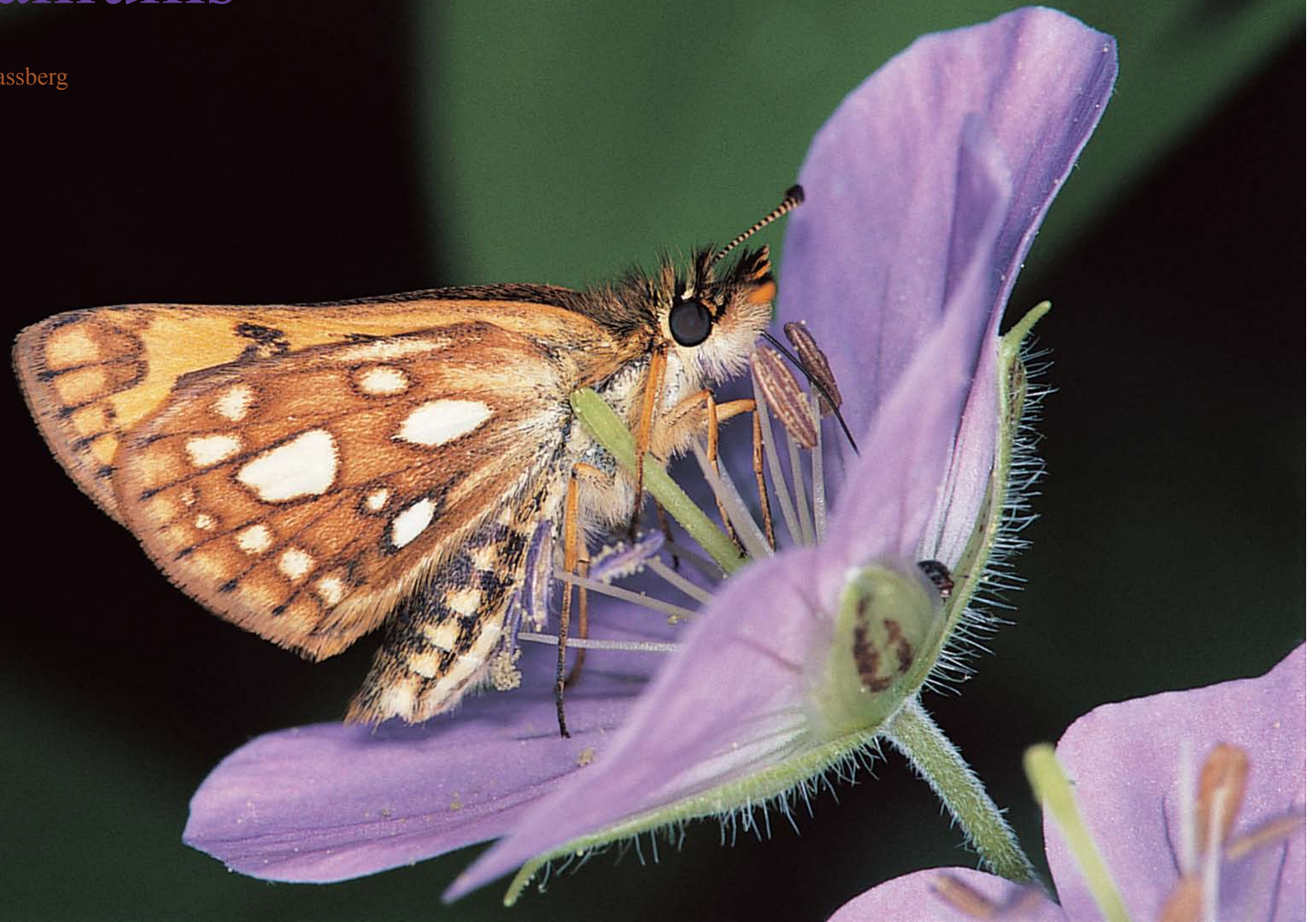


Skipperlings

Love Geraniums

by Jeffrey Glassberg





The Skipperlings are a wonderful subgroup (subfamily Heteropterinae) of skippers. They resemble grass-skippers, and like them their caterpillars feed on grasses, but unlike the grass-skippers they open their forewings and hindwings in unison (grass-skippers open their hindwings flat but keep their forewings in a vee). Of the more than 100 species in this group, five species occur regularly in the United States, while another 29 are found in Mexico.

Few butterfly species are associated with flower nectar sources that are not also their caterpillar foodplants. Even fewer

groups of butterflies have an association with particular nectar sources that are not also their caterpillar foodplants. However, over the years I have come to associate skipperlings with geraniums. This association goes beyond finding a particular species at a particular location regularly using a particular nectar plant. Rather, I have noticed many species of skipperlings, across the United States and Mexico, using species of geraniums. From Arctic Skippers in northwestern New Jersey to Mayan Skipperlings in cloud forest near the Mexican-Guatemalan border, skipperlings love geraniums.

This page: A four-spotted Skipperling at a pinewoods geranium. Aug. 7, 1989. Upper Carr Canyon, Huachuca Mtns., Cochise Co., AZ.

Opposite page top: A Russet Skipperling at a Richardson's geranium. June 27, 1991. Lookout Mtn., Jefferson Co., CO.

Opposite page bottom: A Russet Skipperling at a geranium. July 3, 2008. Apex Park, Jefferson Co., CO.

Pages 30-31: Arctic Skipper at a wild geranium. June 1, 1995. High Point SP, Sussex Co., NJ.