

Spring into Action

It's a new year! A new start. What can you do to make the world a little bit better this year? Many things actually. And, since this is *American Butterflies*, a publication of the North American Butterfly Association, here let's focus on butterflies.

This spring you can add a few new native plants to your butterfly garden — or start a new one! Each butterfly garden that includes caterpillar foodplants is likely to actually increase the number of butterflies in the world. Nothing wrong with that! To learn about what plants would be good for your garden, check out the NABA Butterfly Garden and Habitat webpages at www.naba.org. Once you've established a butterfly garden, you might want to have it be NABA Certified. The application form is at the above-mentioned webpages.

Already underway in some areas, this year you can take part in a NABA Butterfly Count, including the 4th of July Counts in the United States, the 1st of July Counts in Canada, and the 16th of September Count in Mexico and the Seasonal Butterfly Counts. Or, better yet, you can participate in an existing Count and start a new one! These counts provide increasing amounts of data that scientists use to study changes in butterfly populations, the effects of climate change (see pg. 40 of this issue), and other questions about butterfly biology. You can see what existing counts are located in your area, and around the country, by visiting the NABA website, and, under Butterfly Counts, clicking on U.S. Canada or Mexico and then on "maps."

I'm guessing that you need some exercise. How about just going out to your local park, or other natural area, and noting what butterfly species are flying and how many individuals of each are present. If you then put your trip report into the Butterflies I've Seen (BIS) database, it will help scientists in a similar, but

different, way from the 4th of July Counts. In addition, you will have an instantly accessible record of your butterfly sightings. And, if you then email your list from the BIS page to sightings@naba.org; everyone will enjoy your observations.

Another worthwhile activity would be to take an active role in your local NABA chapter, spearheading activities such as educational outreach to both schoolchildren and adult groups. Or, if there isn't a NABA chapter in your area, get together a group of butterfly enthusiasts, or a group of people who could become butterfly enthusiasts, and start one. To get an idea about what NABA chapters are doing, visit the NABA Chapters pages.

And last, but not least, you could support the National Butterfly Center (NBC). You could visit the NBC and be rewarded with great butterflies (and birds, and dragonflies, and wildflowers). Just recently, the beautiful new Visitors Pavilion was completed (see *American Butterflies* Winter, 2010). This is a great opportunity to both provide important financial support that will enable the continued operation of the National Butterfly Center and to gain widespread personal recognition by naming a portion of the already existing Visitors Pavilion. Some of the naming opportunities still available include the gift shop, the cafe, the exhibit hall, the entry garden, the entry ailee, and the outdoor courtyards. If you would like to pursue any of these possibilities, please contact me, either by email at glasssberg@naba.org; or by telephone at the NABA office, 9730-285-0907; or by writing to NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960.

