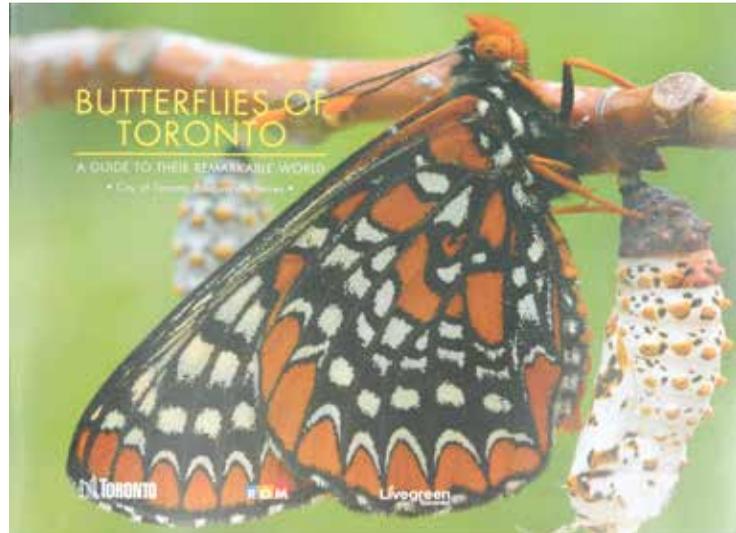


Butterflies of Toronto: A Guide to Their Remarkable World.

Butterflies of Toronto
Working Group. 2011.
City of Toronto Biodiversity
Booklet Series, Book 2.
City of Toronto. Softcover
65 pp. \$Free through the
Toronto Public Libraries.

Review by Mike Reese



This is the second book in the City of Toronto Biodiversity Booklet Series, a series of books highlighting the biodiversity of the Toronto area and whose main goal is to “cultivate a sense of Stewardship in Toronto area residents.” If the rest of the books in the series are as inspiring and thought provoking as this one, then there should be many other regions throughout North America mimicking their efforts. I am a big fan of local guides, especially for beginners or someone just visiting an area, and a book like this one would be extremely useful for any metropolitan area.

This book was developed by a group of fifteen volunteers, contributing artists, part-time city staff, and designed by the City of Toronto Information Production. It was funded by donations and grants, and is distributed free-of-charge through the public library system. The book doesn't purport to be a field guide by most normal standards, but it is heavily illustrated with photos of all 110 species that have been recorded from the Toronto area, as well as illustrations and photos of habitats and life histories, and a variety of tables and charts highlighting resident butterflies, migrants, and historical records.

The book discusses a variety of topics related to butterflies including butterfly watching, butterfly biology, threats to butterflies, both natural and human, a history of Toronto entomologists, and encourages using binoculars while discouraging collecting. An interesting chronology of the Toronto butterfly year and a list of good butterflying sites in Toronto are very useful for visitors to the area.

True to its main purpose in cultivating a sense of stewardship in its residents, it discusses local policy initiatives to increase diversity and maintain natural environments and then broadens this to include information about regional and provincial conservation efforts. It then follows this with a discussion on what an individual can do to help the effort, including participating in the local NABA count, and information on creating a butterfly garden with detailed information about host and nectar plants. It concludes by stressing that the responsibility to protect and maintain diversity starts at home.

This book is a great example about what can be accomplished by a group of dedicated people who came together to help educate others about butterflies, and what an individual can do to help the butterflies. It packs a lot of information into 65 pages and should be a model for other areas. 



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