

Dating Disorders

Beginning on page 4 of this issue, you can learn about Seasonally Affected Dating Disorder (SADD) in butterflies. Here, I want to discuss Seasonally Affected Dating Disorder in Errant butterflies (SADDER). There are two forms that SADDER takes.

Clearly, if you are a butterflyer, you are, almost by definition, deviating from the normal course of human activities, because, unfortunately, most humans do not spend much time going gaga about butterflies.

Currently, if we guess that perhaps 25,000 people in the United States are semi-seriously interested in butterflies (a wildly optimistic number), this translates into about 1 person in 12,000 being a butterflyer. So, when you go to the supermarket and chat up that interesting-looking person, they are highly unlikely to be a butterflyer, thus putting the kibosh on any type of serious relationship.

As I mention in the Go Get Set On Your Marks article, about cloudywing identification, on page 8 of this issue, if you have mastered the subject of cloudywing identification then you clearly have gone off the deep end with butterflies and you need to spend more time with your family and friends.

Ah, but here's the rub. If being a butterflyer is important to you and only 1 person in 12,000 is also a butterflyer, you may not have family and friends! So, if you are a butterflyer and want to find a butterflyer partner what do you do?

Rare and uncommon butterflies have figured out how to concentrate their numbers so that they are likely to find a mate. Many species fly to the top of the highest hilltop in the area. Thus, all of the individuals inhabiting an area of hundreds of square miles might show up for a party at the 1000 square foot hilltop. A smaller group of species takes the opposite approach, concentrating in

arroyos and creek bottoms.

So, for butterflyers, the trick is to figure out a mechanism to concentrate the numbers of butterflyers in one place. Wait a minute — maybe that's why the butterflying gods invented NABA chapters!

Currently, there are about 30 NABA chapters scattered across the United States. Still, about two-thirds of NABA members do not live in an area with a NABA chapter. For those of you who don't currently enjoy the benefits that a NABA chapter brings, I suggest that you consider forming one. You'll not only improve your own life, becoming a Highly Appreciated Papilio PersonalitY (HAPPY), you'll also help the environment, and thus all people, by working to conserve butterflies and their habitats.

The second form of Seasonally Affected Dating Disorder in Errant butterflies (SADDER) relates to butterfly seasons. As we all know, in most parts of the United States there really is little or no butterfly activity during the winter months. So, how can a needy butterflyer hook up with another butterflyer during the cold and windy winter?

Amazingly, NABA has stepped up to the plate here as well — offering the Texas Butterfly Festival, in Mission, Texas, this November 2 through 5 as a venue for seeing amazing numbers and varieties of butterflies while luxuriating in the approving glow of your fellow butterflyers. So, I urge you to escape the butterfly-less winter blahs and join your compatriots in the warm and lepidiferous Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

I know that I'll be there. And, even though I've already found my life-long mate, we can still talk. See you in November!