

Butterfly show no flight of fancy

Carleton University's sixth annual butterfly show running until Oct. 13 is not just an opportunity for the public to gaze at some exotic winged beauties; it's a chance for kids and adults to learn the importance of studying these colourful insects.

"They're nature's barometer," explained Ed Bruggink, Carleton's greenhouse supervisor and organizer of the show, open daily from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. "If you upset nature's balance, they're the first ones to throw up red flags."

When ecologists and conservationists

notice a decrease in butterfly populations, it's a warning that something is going wrong in the environment.

"That is why a show like this is so important," says Jayne Yack, an assistant professor of biology at Carleton, who recommends visitors wear bright colours, as they attract butterflies.

"The only way we can look forward to a healthy and preserved environment is for people to really value and have a direct experience with it (nature)."

The show, fully booked for field trips by area schools this week, will see the re-

lease of 800 exotic butterflies, at a cost of \$4,000, into Carleton's greenhouse. Visitors can also watch chrysalises, shipped from London, England, hatch in a high-humidity nursery simulating a rainforest, and begin their lives as butterflies.

"They'll live 3-4 weeks," Bruggink says. "I just let them fly until they die."

Literature, photographs and large-scale cutouts are also on hand to help guests identify the species they see.

"We saw the blue morpho," an excited Emmerson Harkin, 9, says of the butterfly he identified.

— Chris Hunsley



Suzanne Bird SUN

TAYLOR HENDERSON, 8, checks out a Scarlet Swallowtail at the butterfly show.