

Butterfly show returns to Carleton for 16th year



There were more than 600 butterflies on display.

PHOTO BY JAIDEN DOYLE

JACKIE BASTIANON

Crowds of people lined up for hours to attend Carleton's 16th annual Biology Butterfly Show on Oct. 4.

The exhibit, which runs from Oct. 3-12, featured over 600 butterflies on display, according to greenhouse manager Ed Bruggink.

There were 40 different varieties of species, Bruggink said. The species vary slightly from year to year, depending on the breeders' availability around the time of the show.

Bruggink said his family started the exhibition 16 years ago, and it quickly became an annual event because of its popularity. He said he still helps run the exhibit with the help of Jim des Rivières, a moth and butterfly expert, and volunteers from two groups: The Carleton Biologist and Let's Talk Science.

The butterflies are shipped over from England inside a box where they lie still, nestled in their chrysalides, or cocoons, according to exhibit volunteer Jennifer Skanes.

Skanes said she is thrilled to have the green and black African Moon Moth, in the mix this year because the species is not always available.

Skanes added when the butterflies arrive in Ottawa, they are placed inside a screened area until they hatch. This area is connected

to an outlet that leads to the rest of the greenhouse, where they are free to fly around.

Bruggink said the butterflies have a lifespan averaging from 2-3 weeks, and most of this time is spent eating, mating, and flying. He added the greenhouse is kept at 26 degrees Celsius with large tropical plants and ponds that are designed to replicate the warm climate that is familiar to the butterflies.

The butterflies love to eat citrusy fruits, the more rotten the better, according to Bruggink. As a result, many visitors arrive with pieces of grapefruit and oranges.

No entrance fee was required to get in. Bruggink said this is one of the reasons why he finds the exhibition so special.

"We wanted to give something back to the community, so it had to be free, no charge," Bruggink said. He added people were encouraged to donate a few dollars in the box situated at the end of the tour.

The money collected will be used to pay back the loan from the Carleton science department, which helped fund the event, according to Skanes.

Hana Ahmad-Yousuf, a Carleton alumna who came to see the show on its second day with her eight-year-old, said the line was worth the wait.

"It's really quite magical," Ahmad-Yousuf said. □