

2nd Annual Butterfly Count

Earth Team Volunteers converged on the Manhattan Plant Materials Center (PMC) July 13 for the 2nd Annual Manhattan Summer Butterfly Count sponsored by the PMC. The count was conducted as part of the 37th North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Butterfly Count. After receiving instructions for the count the volunteers split into groups. One group (with previous count experience) headed for the Konza Prairie and another group requiring some training in butterfly identification and observation techniques stayed at the PMC. Following a review of specimens in the PMC's collection, I led the group around the PMC grounds. At ten in the morning there was not much flying-insect activity: a few bees and wasps but no butterflies. One participant, Poornima, a recent graduate from Kansas State University (KSU), was from India, so she was not familiar with our native butterflies. Being an entomologist, however, she is a keen observer. After we had combed most of the plant demonstration-area west of the office, I saw her crouched low to the ground and assumed she was looking at and photographing some sort of beetle or something. When we caught up with her we could see that she had spotted our first butterfly for the day, a gray hairstreak. The early morning had been cool and even after the mercury had



Poornima Viswanathan (left) and Diane Barker photograph butterflies visiting the thickspike gayfeather for later identification.

climbed to 80°F, the butterflies just were not moving. As we walked over to the thickspike gayfeather, which was just beginning to bloom, we spotted our first butterfly in flight. As the temperature rose a few more butterflies came out but we had to look for them. They were mostly found around flowering plants, though a grassed waterway produced a couple of species to add to our list.

By noon we had only nine species. In the afternoon, in just about the hottest and brightest part of the day, I moved on to the buttonbush Initial Seed Increase block that was in full bloom, and I hit the jackpot. I counted 19 silver spotted skippers, 5 tiger swallowtails, and several additional species to bring the species count at the PMC to 12.

As the afternoon progressed, information started coming in from the field as to how the other groups had fared. A total of 41 species represented by 363 individuals were counted by seven observers in three parties. The Manhattan count was just one of many counts conducted in association with the NABA across North America, where volunteers converged on count circles 15 miles in diameter and conducted a one-day census of all butterflies observed within these areas. Other areas in the Manhattan Butterfly Count Circle included the Sunset Zoo and the KSU Gardens in Manhattan.

Late Summer Observations

Late summer and early fall flowers provide some great habitat for pollinators. Butterflies by the hundreds have gathered these past few weeks on plant species such as dotted gayfeather and Maximilian sunflower. Great numbers of alfalfa butterflies and eastern tailed blues seem to dominate but plenty of Monarchs, sulfurs, silver-



Monarchs and sulfurs busily work the flowers of dotted gayfeather in the PMC's Initial Seed Increase field.

spotted skippers, and various other skippers are seen as well. The alfalfa butterfly is appropriately named as the alfalfa field just down the road from the PMC was loaded with them the first week of September. The chocolate mint

out in front of the office was literally a beehive of activity with numerous species of bees, flies, wasps, and busily working the mint's flowers.

~John M. Row, Plant Materials Specialist

'Lippert' Bur Oak

'Lippert' bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa* (Michx.), is a seed-propagated cultivar recommended for conservation use in multi-row windbreaks, reforestation for watershed protection, and wildlife habitat plantings. Lippert's deeply furrowed bark and bright green foliage make it an attractive tree for farmstead and field windbreak plantings.

The initial germ plasm was collected in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1970, by Robert D. Lippert, former Soil Conservation Service Plant Materials Specialist. Lippert was selected for superior growth rate, plant vigor, excellent form, seedling vigor, and known seed source. Lippert was released in 1994 by the NRCS PMC in cooperation with KSU and Kansas Forest Service.



Lippert bur oak at Tribune, Kansas

Lippert is a broad-leaf, deciduous, medium-to-tall tree reaching a potential mature height of 100 feet. It is characterized by a broad, round, open crown, corky twigs, and thick, ridged, deeply furrowed bark. Leaves are bright green above, pale beneath with a close fine, stellate pubescence,

five to nine rounded lobes, deeply incised in the middle, almost in two, with the basal portion being smaller than the outer leaf. Acorns provide valuable food for many animal species.

The full area of adaptation of Lippert remains unknown. Initial adaptation was thought to be the Panhandle of Texas to central Oklahoma to Manhattan, Kansas. However, field plantings of Lippert since the initial release supports the use of Lippert westward to the Kansas/Colorado state line. Plantings in a 16-inch rainfall climate have performed very well, demonstrating excellent plant growth and vigor along with nut production for wildlife benefits.

Seedlings of Lippert are easy to propagate from seed. The average germination rate exceeds 90 percent.

Foundation stock for establishing seed orchards is available from the USDA-NRCS PMC, 3800 South 20th Street, Manhattan, Kansas 66502, 785-539-8761.



The fruit is an acorn up to 2 inches long, half enclosed in a distinctive fringed cup.

Maturing acorn at Tribune

~Mark Janzen, Plant Materials Specialist

Changes in Staffing at the Manhattan Plant Materials Center

In early June just after the PMC's Field Days, Allen Casey and his wife Kayla packed up all their worldly possessions and moved east to Saint Charles, Missouri. Allen had been reassigned to the Elsberry PMC as assistant manager. Allen's education and willingness to learn new things make him an ideal candidate to work in the Plant Materials Program. His outgoing attitude and computer skills are certainly missed here at the PMC.



Allen stands next to malaise trap that he set out last year.

Then in July Erma Leuthold, clerk typist at the PMC, decided to retire after 34 years of service to the government. The staff celebrated Erma's retirement with a pizza lunch party on July 28 at her request. Erma was presented with a certificate from the Salina State Office thanking her for her 34 years of service to the U.S. Government.



(L-R) Erma with some old friends, Edie Hadle, and Mary Shaffer, PAS, NRCS, Salina

~Richard L. Wynia, PMC Manager