

Basic Butterfly Photography



Basic tips and tricks to photography
in the world of butterflies.

The Most Important Rule of Photography!

If you are not a professional photographer, dependent upon pleasing other people with your photos, the first rule of photography is simple ...

... please yourself!

This course is designed to give basic guidelines only and to help you with a few basics of butterfly photography.

Take Many Photos of Your Subject!





Sometimes you have very little control over the background or angle. A slight movement may startle your butterfly. Take preliminary photos if you'd like then move slowly, very slowly as you continue to take photos.

Movement

Your shutter speed
will either ...

1. freeze a butterfly's wings in place or
2. allow a bit of blur and show motion.





Movement will be captured when your shutter speed number is smaller (the shutter is open for a longer time).



Less movement will be captured and your subject frozen when your shutter speed number is larger (the shutter is open for less time)

Because the shutter is open a shorter amount of time, your photo may be dark. Photo editing can lighten the photo. If the photo is extremely dark, photo editing will not be able to correct the photo enough to compensate.

Is this Cloudless Sulphur flying to or from the flower?

One method to capture a butterfly in motion is to focus on a butterfly that is sitting or drinking nectar. When it moves, release the shutter.

This butterfly is lifting off the flower after it finished drinking nectar.



How do you tell a butterfly to stand still and smile?



The finished photo from the photo shoot (above) is on the next slide.

Chill it!

For a few minutes place it in the warmest part of your refrigerator.

- The butterfly should be too cool to fly for about sixty seconds.
- Quite often butterflies will open their wings to warm up in the warm light.

* Butterflies are not harmed when placed in this simulation of a cool fall night for a few minutes.



Once again, the set up ...
... and the finished photo!



Photo Editing



With a good photo editing computer program you can erase mistakes, change lighting, color, mask, frame, and much more.



'Fake' Backgrounds

So you need to take a photo and can't take a decent photo with the backgrounds available?

These photos were taken indoors using a set up with real flowers and living butterflies.



- Cool your butterfly and place it on the flower you have prepared.
- Choose your background color carefully. In the photo below, a incorrect color was chosen as a background. White flowers will not show well with a white background.
- Place a drop of 10% sugar water into the center of the flower. If your butterfly is hungry, it may linger to drink!



- Use a paper bag with paper attached as a background.
- Carry papers in your camera case to use in the field.
- Papers with blurry colors in the background are often more attractive than solid colors. These colors should not detract from your subject!
- To prevent shadows (as are present in this photo) use additional lighting from the side.



The Barred Sulphur to the left is drinking sugar water from a flower inside a building with a solid green paper stapled to a paper grocery bag for the background.

The Monarch was cooled and placed on roses (on cotton batting) and the photo snapped quickly as it opened its wings to warm up in the light.





Ingredients:

three patient boys as models, tissue paper, camera, projector screen for a background, cool butterflies (none were harmed in the photo shoot), and photo editing.

From set up to finished product ... you control your photograph!



Macro Photography



Many cameras do not have the capability to take macro photography photos.



Many cameras have a built-in macro lens or the capability to attach macro lens to your camera.

Microscope Photography

Microscopes with a third eyepiece are available for photography purposes.

Add an adaptor for your camera and you're set!

Check with your supplier to determine which microscope and adaptors you need for your camera.





Enjoy!

