



King Weekly Sentinel

Arts & Entertainment

Butterflies and zinnias a great garden combo

By Grazyna Tonkiel

With great uneasiness after March 11, the official declaration of the Covid-19 world pandemic, we closed our doors to the outside world in order to protect ourselves.

In the meantime, the natural world around us continued its yearly cycle of life. Did you notice that spring came earlier than it had in the last 124 years? This year the spring equinox occurred on March 19. Just behind our windows migrating birds have arrived, sweet robins announce spring and migrating butterflies are on their way to visit us again.

I wish I could witness the cloud of Painted Lady butterflies flying in high altitude from Ecuador to Canada.

The first Sunday of May was an amazing sunny spring day, with temperatures around 20°C, warm enough to energize the bodies of two Eastern Comma butterflies, allowing them to fly around my garden. This was a proclamation of butterfly season 2020's opening! These two butterflies have been hibernating fully grown and waiting for these weather conditions all winter.

Eastern Comma butterflies as well

as majority of other Commas, Mourning Cloaks, Red Admirals, Milbert's Tortoiseshells or Variegated Fritillaries are the first ones to showcase their heavenly beauty in our gardens, parks and meadows every spring. If you are wondering how they survive without flowers, early emerging butterflies feed mostly on tree sap, and in my butterfly territory there are quite a few Blue Bells to greet them every spring. So, if you like butterflies have your eyes wide open on warm spring days and search for little Commas or glorious Mourning Cloaks basking in the sun on tree bark or stones.

All the other butterflies of our region will emerge much, much later, as they have to complete metamorphosis. Timing depends on which stage-form, egg, chrysalis or caterpillar, they enter into winter. In spring they have to complete their life circle and become butterflies. We won't see them until early summer.

Spring is a very exciting time of the year, a time of renewal and new beginnings, the planning and planting of fresh gardens, with the well-being of all butterflies and other pollinators in mind. My mantra remains unchanged year after year, "what's good for butter-



flies is also good for us."

With this mantra, I will start my vegetable garden, and my containers, planting a blend of vegetables and flowers, so that there will be enough nectar for butterflies, and host plants to support a variety of caterpillars.

Your garden should include plenty of Parsley, Dill, Celery and Carrots, which will encourage magnificent Black Swallowtails to visit and stay for the summer. There are quite a few humble white butterflies in Ontario, not only Cabbage White, but also Large Marble White, Mustard White, Checkered White or Great Southern White, whose survival depends on Mustard family plants, Brassicaceae, such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli. If you don't have a garden add flowering ornamental cabbage to your container, and maybe some angelic white butterflies will become part of your summer this year.

I want to share my long-time secret to an abundance of flower nectar through the summer and fall when everything else dies down for the year. This is the magic of zinnias!

These easy to grow, hardy flowers bring colour, nectar and the glory of butterflies to your surroundings. Zinnias are from the sunflower family. They come in variety of sizes from 12" to 4," and an array of colours from white to every shade of yellow, orange, pink, red, and a little surprise of, lime green

and multi-colours. If you need a wall of bloom, plant 4' giants or grace your container with small ones, and wait for magic to happen. All petals are edible, so they bring some flair and color to a salad. Zinnias don't like transplanting, they need to be sown directly to the ground. They are fast germinating, 4-7 days, and if you plant them by June 1st you will likely see blooms in full glory by mid-July.

I will monitor and record all the fairy-wing creatures I see in my garden and present my findings in my next report on butterflies.

Hopefully I will encounter lots of them to inspire me to draw my next Butterfly Portraits for my upcoming exhibit. Let us all plant Zinnias this year for the sake of the little things, rare declining butterflies and bumblebees, and please don't use harmful chemicals in your gardens, keeping in mind that they not good for the butterflies, and also for all of us.

Grazyna Tonkiel is an accomplished opera singer, visual artist and a conservationist. She was the soloist at Polish National Opera and Ballet Theater in Warsaw and won national and international vocal competitions, her butterfly studies are in collections in over 10 countries. She can be reached at her Gallery Solo studio in King City - www.gtonkiel.com

King Township Library now offers curbside pickup service for residents

King Township Public Library branches will be offering curbside pickup service beginning the week of June 8.

KTPL is confident that the necessary safety standards for patrons, staff and community can be met, now that appropriate protocols are in place and personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff has been procured. Curbside pickup will be available at all four branch locations (Schomberg, Nobleton, King City and Ansonveldt) on a rotating basis until further notice.

This contactless service is a way for the Library to lend books and materials to the public in a safe manner during a public health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic. Patrons will be able to place holds on most Library materials. Once a hold is placed, Library staff will contact you to schedule an appointment for you to pick up your materials. Items will be available for pickup outside of your library branch at your scheduled time.

"The Library will begin accepting material returns and fulfilling holds in the month of June. Our staff will be provided with masks and gloves, as well as quarantining all returned materials for 72 hours before being checked back in and re-circulated," said Rona O'Banion, KTPL's Chief Executive Officer. "The safety of the community and staff is our top priority."

KTPL is following the orders of the provincial government and will continue to keep everyone informed regarding changes in service offerings through the media, our social media platforms and of course their website: kinglibrary.ca. As always, they are here to help! If you have any additional questions, please email them at info@kinglibrary.ca. Emails will be answered between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Take-out now open



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Doug Sherritt doug@lpcmedia.ca

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