

PAVILION FACT SHEET



In the Live Butterfly Pavilion at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, visitors will literally feel the flutter™ as they mingle with hundreds of colorful butterflies in one of Washington, D.C.'s most interactive museum experiences.

Visitor Experience:

Walking into the 1,200-square-foot tropical setting, visitors will be met with the warmth of humid air and bright lights that simulate the species' native climate. This sensation will immediately give way to the rush that comes with being surrounded by more than 400 butterflies in flight. Before entering and exiting the Pavilion, visitors will pass through sealed chambers that help prevent the delicate creatures from escaping.

To get the most out of this thrilling exhibition, there are a few easy steps visitors should take to prepare for their visit.

- **Buy tickets in advance.** The Pavilion can accommodate up to 35 visitors at any one time. To ensure access at the desired time of entry, visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance online at <http://butterflies.si.edu/> or by phone at (202) 633-4629. For more information on ticketing, please reference the enclosed *Ticketing Information* fact sheet.
- **Arrive early.** Leave enough time to pick up tickets at the box office located in the *Butterflies + Plants* Exhibition Hall. Because ticket holders are admitted into the Pavilion every 15 minutes, it won't take long to miss their entry time.
- **Leave the strollers behind.** For the safety of the insects and to avoid overcrowding, no strollers will be allowed into the Live Butterfly Pavilion. The museum recommends that visitors leave their strollers at home, if possible. Otherwise, visitors may temporarily store strollers in the unattended area outside of the O. Orkin Insect Zoo, space permitting.
- **Store your coats.** The Pavilion is heated to 80 degrees with a humidity level of 80 percent to simulate the butterflies' native climates. To avoid overheating, visitors may wish to store their coats in one of the designated locker rooms available at each museum entrance.

Featured Species:

Visitors will enjoy an ever-changing and diverse collection of butterflies and plants at the Live Butterfly Pavilion.

- **Butterflies:** At any one time, more than 400 butterflies will fly through the Pavilion, representing more than 30 species from North America, Central America, South America, Africa and Asia.



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Species include Clippers, Morphos, owls, grey pansies, common sailors, blue glassy tigers, monarchs, tree nymphs, birdwings, queens, sunset moths, julias and many more. Butterflies are selected based on availability from suppliers and are replenished on a regular basis.

- **Plants:** The butterflies and moths that inhabit the Live Butterfly Pavilion sip nectar and collect pollen from a variety of plant species, including jasmine, pentas, lantana, verbena, clerodendron, jatropha and more. Provided by the Smithsonian's Horticulture Services Division, these plants are rotated regularly to provide constant nectar and pollen sources for the insects.

Architectural Design:

Staff from the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and Horticulture Division commissioned a Butterfly House Feasibility Study in September 2004 through HSMM and exhibit designer Gallagher & Associates. The findings of the study, completed in April 2005, provided the basis for the design of the Live Butterfly Pavilion.

In a subsequent concept design for the Pavilion, HSMM worked closely in workshops and interviews with Smithsonian staff and exhibit designer Reich & Petch to provide a house structure, lighting scheme and building infrastructure that allows for the greatest possible interaction between visitors and butterflies. Smithsonian staff and HSMM also researched the construction and operation of several other butterfly houses to help determine the baseline criteria for their design and examine various challenges encountered by the institutions operating them.

For example, visitors may notice that right angles are scarce in the Live Butterfly Pavilion. Butterflies are easily trapped in corners and crevices, keeping them away from the valuable light that they need for survival. Pavilion designers took these and other factors into consideration throughout the design and development process to ensure that the safety of the butterflies is never compromised.

HSMM is a full-service architecture, engineering and planning firm with 22 offices throughout the United States.

