



Butterfly Elf, What's Your Favorite Nectar?

Prof. James H. Yang

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“In these times of global warming and ecological disaster, teaching children about nature is more important than ever.”

“Butterfly Elf, What's Your Favorite Nectar?” is an upcoming ecology picture book set for publication in 2025.



Broadtailed
swallowtail,
National
butterfly of Taiwan

Professor James H. Yang is a digital painter whose artwork includes pictures of butterfly nectar plants, including milkweeds, star clusters, and kawakami hydrangea, along with butterflies native to Taiwan and the U.S., such as the monarch, tiger swallowtail, old world swallowtail, and zebra swallowtail.



Nectar

for Butterflies

Butterfly Elf, What's Your Favorite Nectar?

This picture is the cover image of the upcoming ecology picture book, “**Butterfly Elf, What's Your Favorite Nectar?**” set for publication in 2025. The book is based on Prof. Yang's butterfly pollination project aimed at educating elementary school children about butterfly ecology and environmental protection. Prof. Yang said that it took over three years to complete the exhibited pictures, while he led his students as volunteers in local butterfly festivals and taught children to cherish the earth.

“This project is my personal contribution to help bring awareness to our plight. It aims to promote ecological conservation.”

On the whole, Yang's eco-art exhibit aims to inspire children as well as adults to understand the ecology of butterflies, which are placed biologically at the bottom of the nature's food chain in the larval stage, providing food for other creatures like bees, mantis, lizards, and birds, for a bio-diverse eco-system.

Yang's previous exhibited butterfly paintings are also available for free review on the website of the Life Science Museum of Academia Sinica, Taiwan.



Take one of the exhibited pictures for example. The nectar plant in this picture is Eupatorium. The flowers are white, but the most distinctive feature is its smell, which is like steamed salmon with lemon juice. This unique scent attracts many purple butterflies to collect nectar. In the sunlight, their wings also shimmer with a blue color, while the underside of their wings is brown, helping them camouflage on the ground and avoid predators.

Although these butterflies look purple and blue with white spots, each species has different characteristics. For example, in the upper right corner is the female striped purple butterfly, which has white stripes on its hindwings, resembling a zebra; the male is the one in the lower right corner. Both of them look very different. Other purple butterflies also have their own unique features, waiting for you to discover.

In particular, like monarch butterflies in North America, these purple butterflies also overwinter, migrating from northern to southern Taiwan, a distance of about 300 kilometers. Both of the butterflies overwinter in the largest consolidated gatherings of any butterflies worldwide.



purple butterfly

More detailed information about purple butterflies migrating in Taiwan is available online:

Purple butterflies in Taiwan



Migratory Butterflies

These two butterflies overwinter is the largest consolidated gatherings of any butterflies worldwide.



Monarch in North America