



SPECIAL LECTURE

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Silver Jubilee Hall

BUTTERFLIES

By

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Abstract

For some years I am venturing into the butterfly world – an amateurish endeavour no doubt, but through this I have come across a sphere that harbours unsurpassed beauty, intrigue and diversity. The slides will capture their diversity, life cycle, their habits and habitats, and the role they play in nature. India has a good share -- 1500+ species -- of the world population which is close to 18000 species. West Bengal and the states of North East are rich in butterfly diversity. A butterfly is a lovable entity to us, and in all cultures they have a special place. The emotions we associate with a butterfly mainly serve anthropocentric purpose. In reality we rarely observe a true butterfly. We don't know their names or never think that they really might have a name - like a bird or fish or even the stars. We always covet a garden well ornamented and wish that its floral bounty will draw swarms of butterflies, which is considered a heavenly phenomenon. Create a garden, and butterflies will unfailingly oblige us. Butterflies love nectar, they thrive on it. But we seldom think that before it became a nectar-loving butterfly, it was a wiggling larva, and for it to survive it needs some specific plants to chew on. The irony is that many of these plants are considered as weeds, removal of which is a prerequisite for having an aesthetically pleasing garden! So some rethinking about the nature of butterflies is needed. We truly love butterflies. So it is time we begin to truly understand them.
