

OCTOBER 1 - 14, 2017 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

MONARCH MALE VS FEMALE

I thought it would be interesting for those of you who like to know the difference between the sexes, to see an easy ID mark that will tell you which sex you are looking at.



(1) **Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, Male, nectaring on Swamp Milkweed © Dick Harlow

A male has two enlarged black spots (scent glands) one on each inside dorsal edge in the middle of the first vein of the hindwing as seen in picture (1). Notice the arrow pointing to one of the dark spots. However, this can only be seen on the dorsal surface of the hindwing not on the ventral side of the hindwing. Unless you either have a picture of the open wing or are looking at the opened wing of a Monarch as it is feeding, it is unlikely you will be able to tell the gender of the butterfly. Thus, when the Monarch has its wings folded the dot is not present. This is the distinctive characteristic that you can see in the field when looking to determine what the sex is of the individual butterfly you are looking at. However, males tend to patrol looking for a mate; therefore, they are more wide ranging and you will tend to see more males than females visiting your garden.



(2) **Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, Female, nectaring on New England Aster © Dick Harlow

In picture (2) you will notice that there are **no** scent glands on the dorsal side of the hindwing. This is a female. Without those dorsal black spots it's a female.

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(3) **Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, Female, nectaring on Zinnia © Dick Harlow

Because patrolling males are more interested in finding a mate they will nectar on most any flower that will give them energy. Females will do the same until they have mated and are then interested in laying eggs. When that happens, they are more interested in finding a milkweed. So, you shouldn't think that adult Monarch butterflies of either sex will search out just milkweed plants. It will depend on the circumstances, whether they are looking for nectar, a mate or egg laying. However, if you see a Monarch searching various parts of a milkweed, resting for a minute or two on a milkweed stem or leaf, you have a better than even chance it would be a female behaving in that manner looking to lay her eggs.

SUNFLOWER VARIETIES



(1) **Common Sunflower**, *Helianthus annuus*, © Dick Harlow

September and October bring out the last of the colorful flowers in yellows and oranges. One of those lingering large flowers is one where the seeds have inadvertently been deposited in your garden by birds or mammals and sprout, grow and flower all by early fall.

Common Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*, is considered the mother of all the many varieties of this plant. As can be seen in the two pictures (1) is smaller than (2), yet they are considered colloquially as sunflowers.

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Some sunflowers are as short as two to three feet and others are as tall as 8-16 feet. Some have many flower heads others have a single flower head. Some flower heads are of medium size whereas others are very large. The two pictures here are of heads where one is twice as large as the other. Yet they self-sowed and grew next to each other.



(2) **Common Sunflower**, *Helianthus annuus*,
© Dick Harlow

The Common Sunflower is native to all 50 States in the United States, and has been introduced to all provinces of Canada except the Yukon Territory and Newfoundland.

If you let the flower heads mature and go to seed, even though they may look a trifle drab, you will be rewarded with goldfinches and other birds husking the seeds during the Fall and possibly into early winter.

BLUE DASHER

The **Blue Dasher**, *Pachydiplax longipennis*, belongs to the Skimmer Family of Dragonflies. Blue Dashers are found along lake, pond, ditch and marshes where the water is calm, or acquiescent to water movement.

As evidenced by picture (1), the male of this species is an easy identification. The all blue dragonfly with vibrant blue-green eyes is a dead give-away. The female (2) is less colorful with its dashed yellow stripe on the side of its dark brown abdomen and whitish dorsal stripe on the dorsal part of its abdomen. This color difference between male and female is a good example of sexual dimorphism.



(1) **Blue Dasher**, *Pachydiplax longipennis*, Male,
© Dick Harlow

Generally, dragonflies are carnivorous. They will eat many different kinds of insects every day. The prey can be as small as fleas and mosquitoes to larger flies, mayflies, and moths.

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Considering that the dragonfly nymphs will eat small fish and insect larvae, we certainly can consider these insects as voracious predators.



(2) **Blue Dasher**, *Pachydiplax longipennis*, Female,
© Dick Harlow



Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*, on Asters,
October 1, 2017, © Dick Harlow

October picture of a Painted Lady, a date and species record. August - October were irruption months for this species at EastView. Last seen on October 9, 2017.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

White-tailed Deer - 2 Doe

Eastern Chipmunk - individuals

AMPHIBIA

American Bullfrog

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Orange Sulphur
Monarch
Viceroy
Painted Lady (irruption year)

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DRAGONFLIES

Ruby Meadowhawk

Weather Tidbits

Month of SEPTEMBER 1-30, 2017

[All Measurements taken at solar noon \(1230 EST\).](#)

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 30.0 mm or 1.2 inches

Overcast Days: 5