



# Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

## Johnson's Garden Talk

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## Gardening with Kids

Jan Decker, Junior Gardeners' Club Coordinator

It doesn't matter what age we are, the sight of a butterfly always causes us to pause for a moment and watch their graceful beauty. Now you can increase that enjoyment by rearing your own butterflies! All it takes is a Discovery Kit from Johnson's and you'll be able to watch up close as the caterpillar matures, changes into a chrysalid, and finally emerges as a beautiful Painted Lady Butterfly. It's so easy and educational, too.

The kit includes a three-foot high hanging mesh Butterfly Pavilion habitat, a certificate to send for ten Painted Lady caterpillars with food, poster, instructions and activity guide. It will take one to two weeks to receive the larvae and about three weeks for the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. You won't want to miss any part of this process, so before sending for the larvae make sure you have nothing scheduled (like a two-week vacation) that would interrupt the project. You can order anytime of the year. If it's cold outside when the butterflies emerge, just provide sugar water inside the pavilion during their life span, usually about two weeks. If it's warm enough outside (above 55°) the butterflies can be released outdoors.

To prolong the butterfly's stay outside and attract others, you will need to provide food and shelter for them. Incorporate a butterfly garden into your landscape or if you're short on space, a window box or other container will work. With the right combination of plants, providing nectar for adults and food for caterpillars, the butterflies may choose to lay eggs in your garden. If you can find the eggs, collect a few for your Butterfly Pavilion and observe the miracle of new life all over again. Refer to page 98 of Johnson's 2003 Plant Guide for a list of trees, shrubs, perennials and vines that attract butterflies and, of course, our staff will be happy to help with your plant selections.