OUR GARDEN BUTTERFLIES

By FRANK AMBARD

Have you a fence of Ixora or Hibiscus? Is the Poinsettia a part of your garden? Do you have Ti-Marie and other flowering weeds in the pathways or between the grass on the lawn?

You have? Good. Then next time you look at those flowers spare a few moments for the butterflies you see around them. Just to help you identify them, here are a few notes giving "Local" names and colours as far as possible.

BUTTERFLIES OF HIBISCUS

Feeding on the nectar from the honey on the Hibiscus, look for the following of the **Pieridae** family: The **Jaune d'Abricot,** a medium-sized insect aptly described as "Yellow of the Apricot." This is a pretty butterfly and occurs all over the island. Then there is the **Salmon** which is smaller than the Jaune d'Abricot, but a truly salmon hue. Next comes the **Common Yellow,** the same size as the "Salmon" but bright yellow. The **Yellow Migrant** is slightly smaller than the "Common Yellow" but not as brightly coloured. You may also find two species of the "**Leaf**" **Pieris** or **Gonopteryx,** one very bright yellow, the other greyish white with two large salmon spots on the upper wings. All these, with the exception of the Jaune d'Abricot, are migrants equipped with strong wings and powerful bodies for long flights. During the last two or three years millions of these insects have migrated from Venezuela.

BUTTERFLIES OF IXORA

Now we reach the Ixora. It is amazing how many butterfly species are found on these flowers. Here are a few that you will generally see:

The **Orange Dog,** of medium size—black, white and red in colour—whose caterpillars can be seen in clusters on lime and orange trees giving off a pungent odour when disturbed. The **Gold Rim,** also a medium-sized insect, totally black with a band of gold near the extremity of each hind wing. The **King Page,** a timid, fairly large black and yellow insect. A peculiarity of most of these insects is that while feeding the wings are in constant motion, while the butterflies that frequent the hibiscus do all their feeding with the wings closed. It is, however, a well-known trait of the **Papilio** or **Page** family, that the insects feed with their wings in perpetual motion and settle, when resting, with their wings open.

BUTTERFLIES OF POINSETTIA

Poinsettia flowers attract the following species:

The **Postman,** totally black with two large red bands on the fore wings. This insect feeds with a leisurely motion of its wings and is not easily disturbed. The **Coffee,** slightly smaller than the Postman, is black with a line of red on each hind wing, and also feeds with a slow motion of its wings. Many of the insect species which feed on poinsettia also feed on ixora and hibiscus, so you may find a King Page on the poinsettia or a Jaune d'Abricot on the ixora.

BUTTERFLIES OF FLOWERING WEEDS

Ordinary flowering weeds like the daisies, Ti-Marie and many others, attract literally hundreds of species such as the **Donkey's Eye,** a medium-sized brown insect with "eyes" on both fore and hind wings, while the **Coolie,** which is red and black with white spots, can be seen keeping company with the Donkey's Eye. Small Whites, small Yellows, countless species of Doctors or Skippers and Erycids, which are usually small insects and extremely fast flyers, are a common sight.

Your garden teems with insect life. The species mentioned are just a few of the butterflies that can be seen in it. Many observations have been made by members of the Field Naturalists' Club, and they have produced exhibits of rather rare species collected only five yards from their front porch. Butterfly collecting should begin in your garden, and when you have exhausted all the material you can find there, then go further afield.

Always bear in mind that yesterday certain species were seen, today and tomorrow you may see entirely different insects. Butterfly collecting is a nice hobby and keeps you out of mischief. **Give it a try in your garden.**

TIDAL TALE

Since the dawn of time there have been many ways of explaining the reason for tides, but none more impressive than the delightful way the former primitive inhabitants of the Philippines explained it all. This is how they decided it all happened:

In a far distant sea lives a gigantic crab who is very regular in all his habits. When the crab goes into his hole, where he remains twelve hours, the water is forced out and accounts for the rising tide.

Naturally, when he comes out again the water fills up the hole and the tide recedes.

Simple, isn't it?