



Lesson for Podcast 02: Be an Entomologist!

Lesson Summary: Discover and record butterflies, caterpillars and their food plants at the Austin Butterfly garden.

Lesson Description: An entomologist is a person who studies insects and that is what you will be doing in this lesson. Trek to the Butterfly Garden (located in the Zilker Botanical Garden,) view the iPod segment, and use the help sheets to identify caterpillars, insect food plants, and butterflies. Results of your finds are recorded in the field journal. The ideal time for this segment is spring, summer and early fall.

Materials Needed:

I-pod, loaded with Zilker Trek and headphones
Journal
Colored Pencils
Help Sheets: Butterfly and Caterpillar help sheet
Optional:
Binoculars
Magnifying Glass
Butterfly Net

Activity Discussion:

Did you know that Austin is home to about 170 species of butterflies? Our help sheet has the most common caterpillars and butterflies you will find at Zilker Botanical Garden, but you may see something that is not on the help sheet. In this case, make a sketch and then look it up on-line when you get home.

It's fun to look not only for the butterflies, but also for the caterpillars. The help sheet has plants that would commonly serve as food for many of the caterpillars. Once you identify the plant, look for plant damage near the end of the branches. Caterpillars prefer to feed on the soft, young growth. If you happen to find a pipe vine caterpillar you can see its protective instincts in action. Right behind their head is a forked organ called an "osmeterium" If you touch it *very gently*, you will likely see an orange secretion that smells bad to potential predators.

Zilker Trek Lesson Plan

Additional Resources:

Web:

Austin Butterfly Forum

<http://www.austinbutterflies.org/>

Texas Entomology

<http://texasento.net>

Notes:

Don't forget to upload your images and scans of your journal pages to our on-line gallery.