



## ***Wings in the Park*** **Snetsinger Butterfly Garden at Tom Tudek Memorial Park**

That angry bee is buzzing too close for comfort. That woolly caterpillar is inching toward you. But watch the bee drinking the nectar from an echinacea coneflower and you may see it as serene. Witness that ugly caterpillar becoming a beautiful butterfly and you'll think twice about squashing the next one that wiggles across your path.

We learn from a young age to be scared of bees and repelled by caterpillars. We may not learn how essential bees, butterflies and all beneficial pollinators are to life.

It makes you stop and think," says Master Gardener Pam Ford, co-founder of Wings in the Park, a yearly event that celebrates pollinators and what they do for us.

Penn State Extension Master Gardeners hosted the seventh annual Wings in the Park in the Snetsinger Butterfly Garden at Tom Tudek Memorial Park on Saturday, July 18. The sun came out and the rain stopped just in time for its "Pollinators Parade" to begin.

Children and adults dressed as bees, butterflies and birds walked from the Kunkle Overlook to the butterfly garden, where they learned how they can save pollinators by providing habitats for them in their own gardens.

Sponsored by Penn State Extension Master Gardeners and partner organizations, Wings in the Park accentuates the positives about pollinators. "When children dress as bees, they become less afraid of them," Ford says. "The whole day is meant to be a joyful experience for children and their families."

The event draws its inspiration from its co-founder Dr. Robert Snetsinger, aka "Butterfly Bob." Dr. Snetsinger and the Penn State Master Gardeners developed the butterfly garden at Tudek Park eight years ago in cooperation with partners of the park.



Ford served as a Master Gardener intern under Dr. Snetsinger, who envisioned the garden as a sanctuary for butterflies, as well as a beautiful place to honor the memory of his late daughter.

“Bob would put a bug in my hand, reminding me of my excitement as a child when I discovered the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly,” Ford said. “Holding that bug tapped into the emotion I had as a child.”

Then he gave her a seedling to take home and plant. “A couple of weeks later, I had a caterpillar on it,” she said. “He knew that’s how it begins. Like the story of Johnny Appleseed.” Give someone a plant and the magic of life will take hold of you.

The first 150 families who attended Wings in the Park received a voucher for a milkweed plant to take home for their gardens.

“Snetsinger Butterfly Garden isn’t a garden of plants or insects,” Ford added. “It’s a garden of stories.”

### **Learn more:**

#### **Snetsinger Butterfly Garden at Tom Tudek Memorial Park 400 Herman Drive, State College**

Take a walk around the three-acre butterfly garden at Tom Tudek Memorial Park for a 360-degree view of brilliant color.

- This diverse ecosystem faces the horse pasture at Tudek Park.
- The garden features more than 30 resident species of butterflies and 100 species of native plants that serve as hosts for caterpillars and provide nectar for adult butterflies.
- Its demonstration gardens showcase pollinator-friendly gardening practices.
- Created in partnership with the Tudek Trust, Ferguson Township, and Centre Region Parks and Recreation, its partners have been working with Dr. Snetsinger since 2007 to develop and maintain this habitat as an educational resource for the community.

This butterfly garden changes every day, so visit often and enjoy!