

By Thelma Beaubien

The warm sunny weather makes it an ideal time to walk a natural area. My passion for butterflies draws me to many locations across the Province of Ontario. Following is a simple guide to help you understand their activity for food and survival. Don't forget your camera!



Nectar – An Eastern Giant Swallowtail lands on a Hoary Puccoon flower to nectar. It places its proboscis deep into the flower to drink the nectar, a sugary syrup.



Sap – Butterflies make use of the dark-coloured bark of a tree as it best matches their colouring for camouflage as they drink the sap from the trunk of a tree.



Puddling - another food source for these Clouded Sulphurs. Here they drink the salts and nutrients from the damp mud. In this case, numerous Clouded Sulphurs have come together to form a Puddle Club. Butterflies will also drink water from other surfaces such as damp sand, gravel, wood and silt.



Imbibing – The Hackberry Emperor is enjoying drinking perspiration called ‘imbibing’ – just another way for them to obtain minerals and salts.



Carrion – rotting carcass is another source of minerals and salts for butterflies pictured here. An additional source is animal scat.



Sunning – This Delaware Skipper is resting on sedge to raise their night-chilled temperatures and warm their flight muscles.



Gray Comma - Watch the ground ahead of you for butterflies on the trail where you are walking.

Good Luck and enjoy your time in nature.