



Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST

"Saving Special Places since 1909"

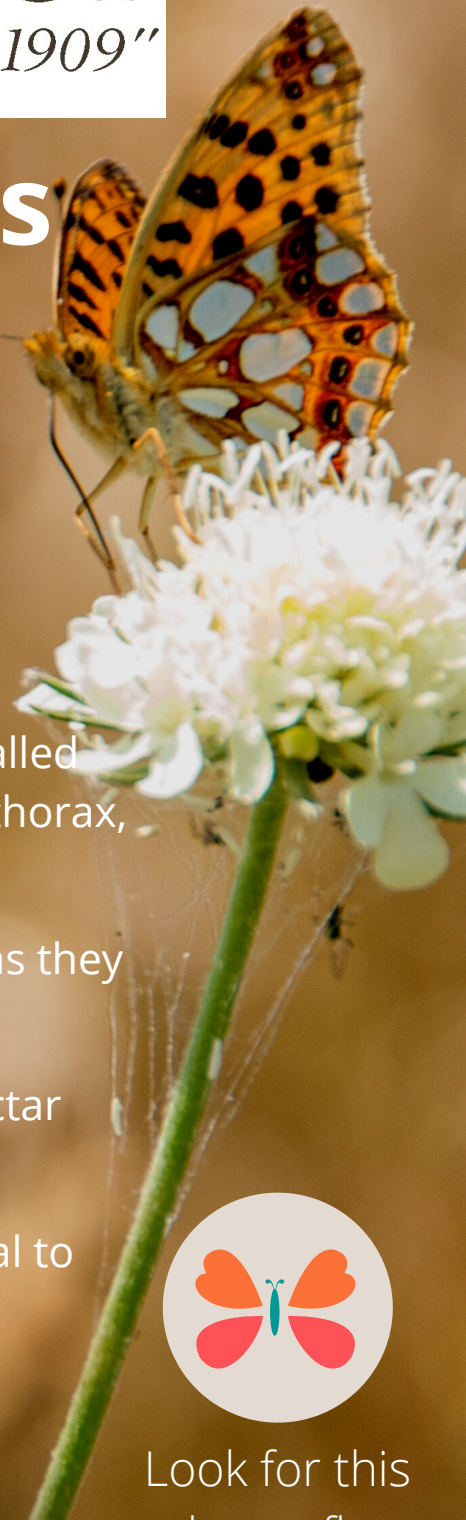
Beauty of Butterflies

A BACKYARD NATURE DISCOVERY

Objective: Get a closer look at butterfly anatomy, learn about the lifecycle from egg to adult, and discover how butterflies and other pollinators help plants grow.

Background:

- Butterflies and moths belong to a group of insects called **Lepidoptera** - they have 6 legs, 3 body parts (head, thorax, abdomen), 2 antennae, and 4 wings
- Butterflies go through **metamorphosis**, which means they change their body form as they grow
- Caterpillars eat leaves and adult butterflies drink nectar from flowers
- Butterflies are **pollinators** which means they are vital to helping certain plants grow

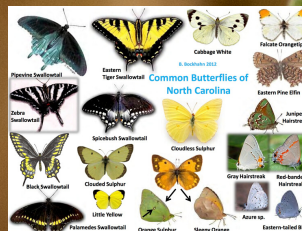


LOOK FOR BUTTERFLIES!

Find some flowers to observe on a sunny day.
How many different species can you find?


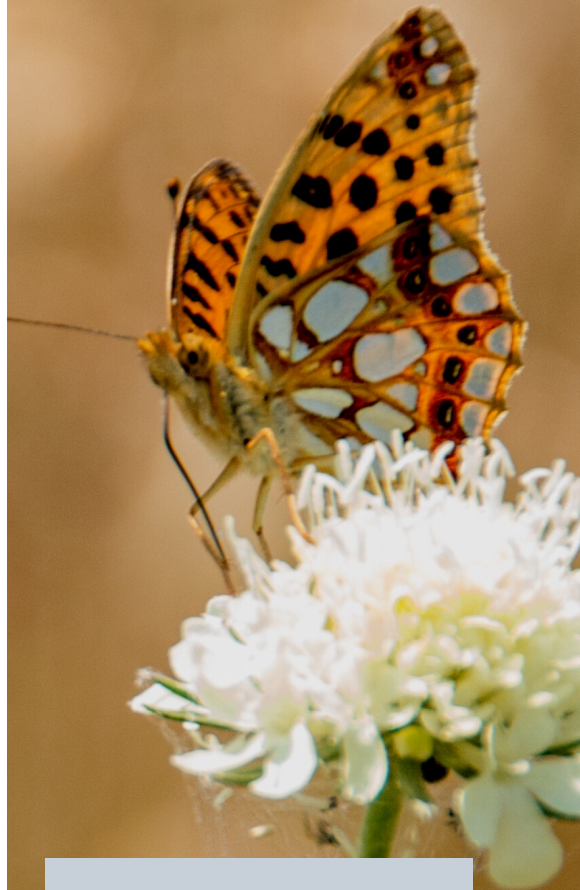
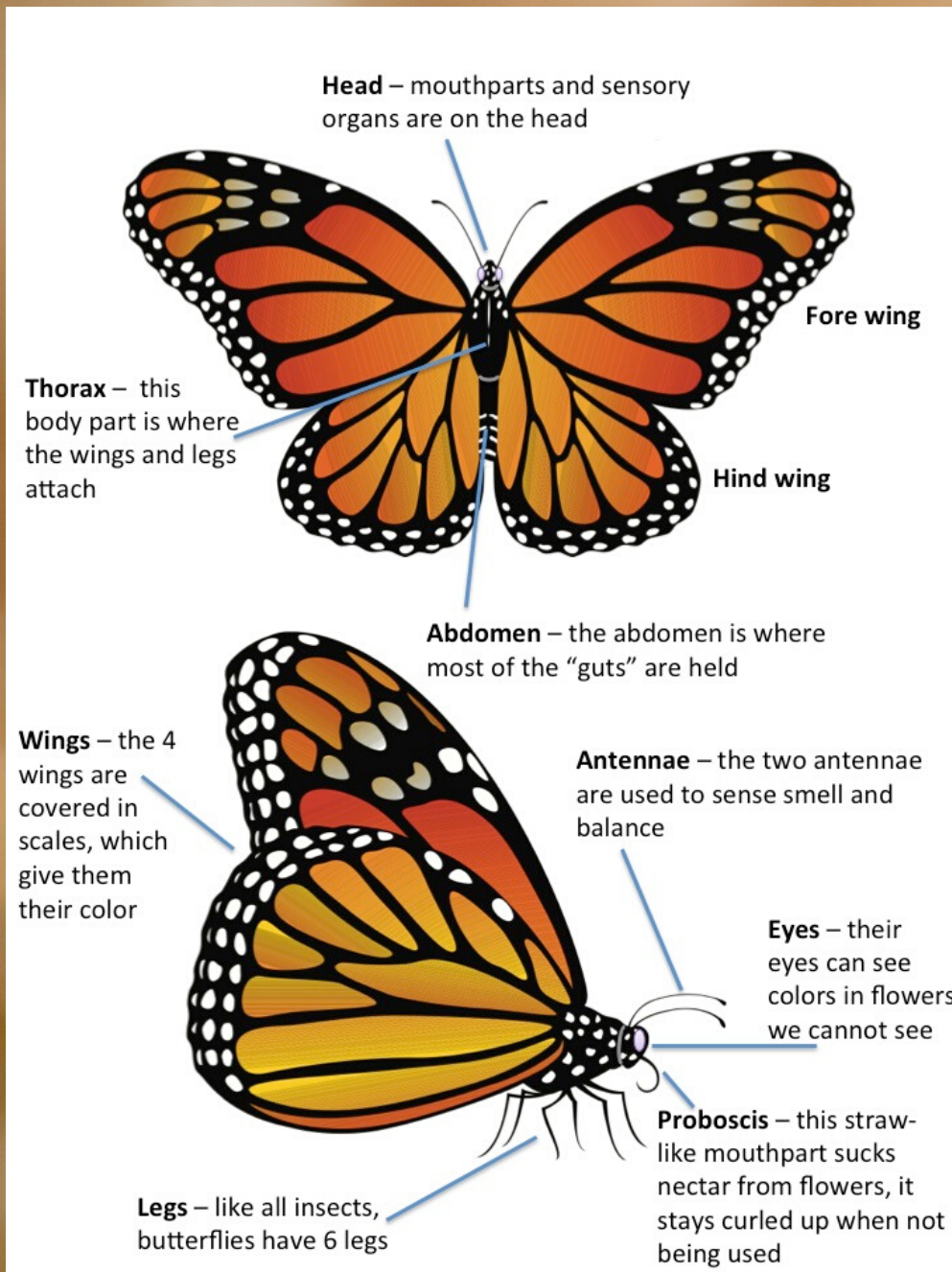


Use this [NC Butterfly Guide](#)
and [Check List](#) to help!



Look for this butterfly symbol for links to online activities!

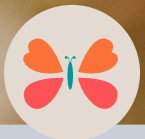
Butterfly Bodies



Label and Color the Butterfly.

"Puddling"

Many butterflies get nutrients and minerals from wet sand, soil, and puddles. This behavior is called "puddling." You can make a butterfly puddle and put it in your garden.

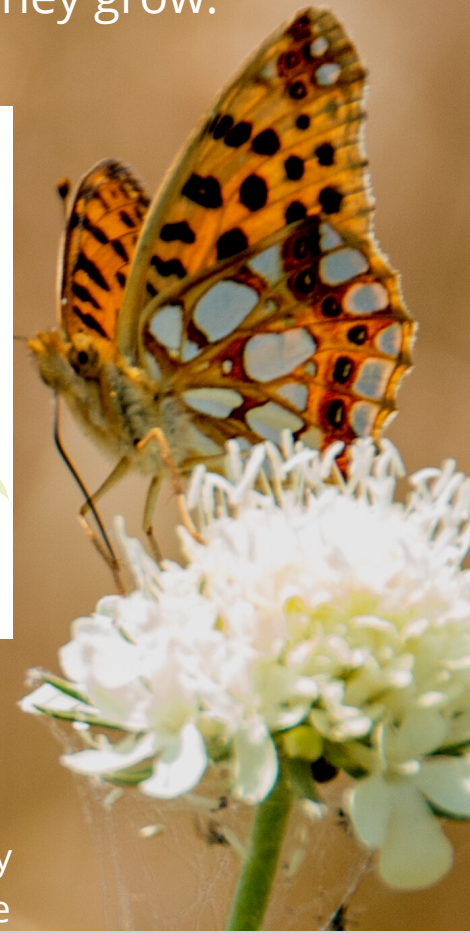
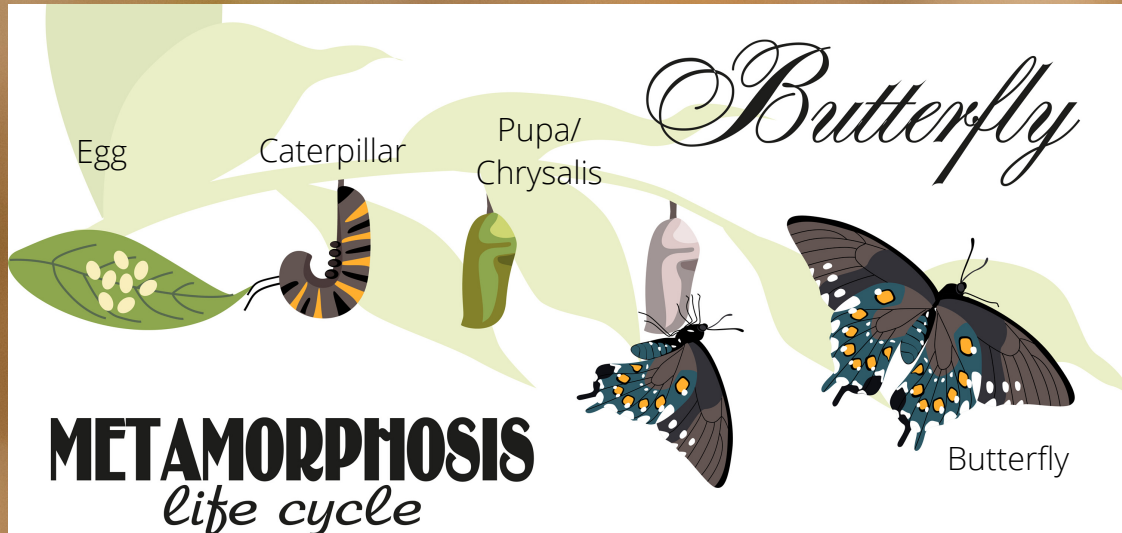


Make a Butterfly Puddle



Big Changes

Butterflies go through metamorphosis, which means as part of their life cycle, they change their body form as they grow.



Egg: The female butterfly lays eggs on a leaf or stem of a plant.

Caterpillar: The eggs grow and when ready a caterpillar (larva) hatches out of each egg, eating its way out! The caterpillar is very hungry and immediately starts eating leaves once it hatches. The caterpillar grows larger as it eats.

Pupa (Chrysalis): Once the caterpillar gets large enough, it attaches to a leaf or twig and creates a hardened case around itself. This is called a chrysalis. The case protects the pupa as it transforms into an adult butterfly.

Butterfly: When ready, the case splits open and the butterfly emerges. At first, the butterfly is wet and its wings are wrinkled. The butterfly hangs its wings and lets them fully form by pumping blood into them. When it is finished, the butterfly flies away in search of flower nectar and mates.

Moths vs. Butterflies

Moths are like butterflies, but have some differences. Exceptions exist, but moths generally:

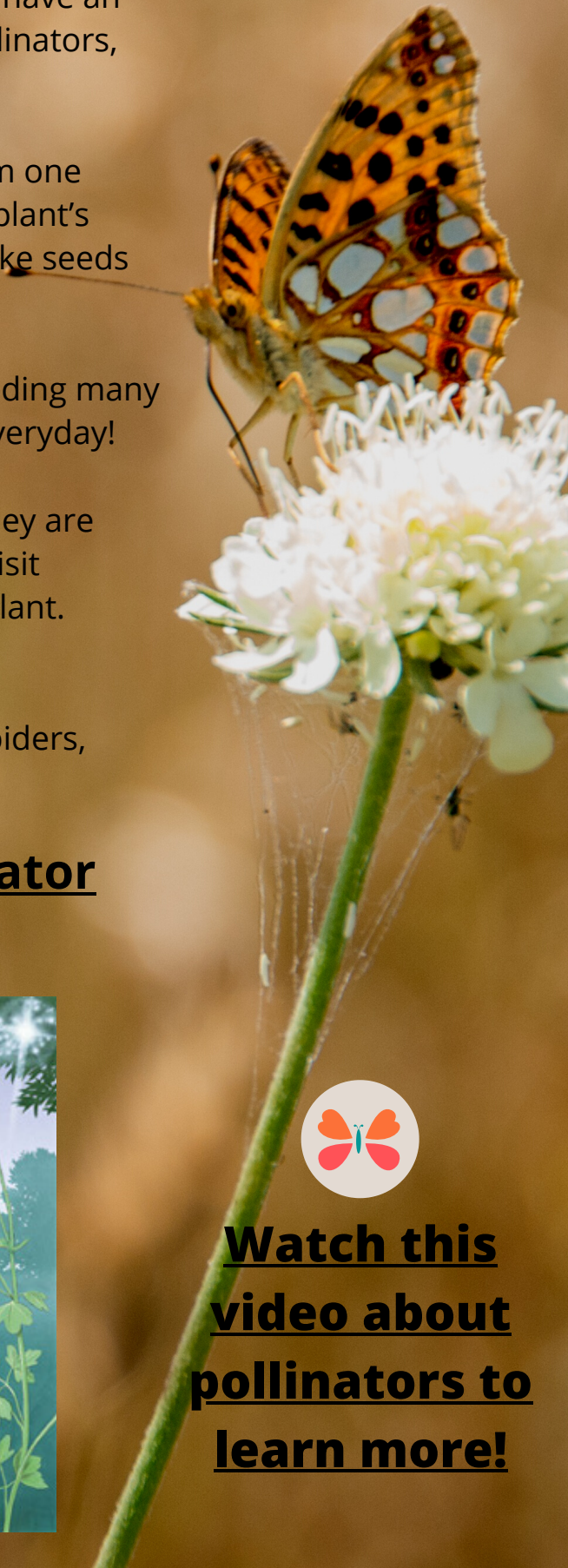
- fly at night
- hold their wings open or folded over their back at rest (butterflies hold them closed)
- have thicker, hairier bodies and antennae
- are not as colorful (but some are very colorful)



[Make a Pasta Butterfly Life Cycle](#)

Pollinator Power

- Butterflies aren't just beautiful to look at, they also have an important function in the ecosystem – they are pollinators, which means they help plants grow!
- **Pollinators** are animals that help move pollen from one flower to another. This is an important part of the plant's lifecycle that is needed in order for the plant to make seeds and fruits.
- 85% of all flowering plants rely on pollinators, including many plants that produce fruits and vegetables we eat everyday!
- Pollinators visit flowers to gather food and while they are there, pollen falls onto their bodies so when they visit another flower, the pollen falls off, fertilizing that plant.
- Pollinators come in all shapes and types including: butterflies, bees, wasps, flies, beetles, true bugs, spiders, hummingbirds, and more!



Check out this USDA Pollinator Activity Book



Watch this video about pollinators to learn more!



Sources

NC Butterfly Guide:

https://files.nc.gov/ncparks/37/FIELD_ID_SHEET_Common_Butterflies_of_NC.pdf

NC Butterfly Checklist:

https://files.nc.gov/ncparks/37/NC_BUTTERFLY_CHECKLIST.pdf

Butterfly Label and Color Sheet:

<http://cleverlearner.com/color-the-parts/images/parts-of-a-butterfly-writing-and-coloring-sheet.pdf>

Butterfly Puddle Craft:

<https://kidsgardening.org/garden-activities-create-a-butterfly-puddle/>

Pasta Butterfly Life Cycle Activity:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/butterfly-life-cycle-plate-craft/>

USDA Pollinator Activity Book:

<https://www.pollinator.org/pollinator.org/assets/generalFiles/PollinatorActivityBook.pdf>

Pollinator Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu7AjOvzh8>

