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"YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT"

by Don Dubois

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In 2012, the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) initiated a nationwide effort to obtain a photographic documentation of caterpillar host plants for butterflies in all states and provinces.

The rules are fairly simple:

- The immature butterfly (egg or caterpillar) must be the result of a free-flying butterfly's choice of a host plant.
- The host plant must be photographed and identified (flowers and fruit helpful).
- Photograph as many stages of development as possible.
- Release butterflies back where they were originally found.
- Locate eggs or young caterpillars as early as possible. This reduces the chance of parasitism.
- Net the small caterpillars to prevent predation. Alternatively, bring a few inside to rear.
- If brought inside, maintain clean enclosures and provide fresh food daily.

Take photos regularly- there are many different photos you may want- egg, five caterpillar instars, chrysalis, and butterfly:

- Get as close as possible to the subject as your camera will allow for good focus,
- Pay attention to background clutter, and good lighting on the subject.
- Bright light but not direct sunlight is usually best for good color accuracy.
- When taking photos of insects, if the whole body cannot be in focus, it is best to have the head (eyes) of the caterpillar or butterfly in focus.
- Submitted photos should be full resolution and uncropped.
- Photos will be cropped as needed at NABA.

Entries are still being accepted. Send documentation to naba@naba.org .



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That said, there are many things you can do to improve your chances of success:

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