

GARDEN SPOT VILLAGE RESIDENTS RAISE AND RELEASE BUTTERFLIES

Personal care residents and team members document lifecycle from egg to adult

NEW HOLLAND, Pa. — Sept. 22, 2011 — Residents and team members from the Mountain View personal care community at Garden Spot Village are bidding summer “good-bye” by releasing the last of the butterflies they’ve raised from eggs.

“We released five monarchs in the last month,” said Diane Pechart, activities director at Mountain View. “We released 11 swallowtails so far.”

Last year, they released a couple of swallowtails. This year, one of the team members contributed caterpillars that she found on parsley plants.

“Then we started looking for them,” Pechart said.

“This is the first year we did monarchs. We were given two, then we went looking for the eggs on milkweed plants. They only feed on milkweed,” she said.

They keep the tiny eggs isolated. Once the eggs hatch, they’re placed in a terrarium so that everyone can see the chrysalises, which hang from the top.

“They’re the most beautiful thing you’ve ever seen,” Pechart said.

Pechart says it usually takes 10 to 14 days for the adult butterfly to emerge from the chrysalis.

“Right now, they are still very green,” she said of the remaining swallowtail chrysalises. “When they start darkening, the butterfly emerges within a day or so. Then they need to hang and dry their wings, usually for two to three hours.”

During the first few hours, the butterfly is sluggish. During that time, the residents can handle them. The butterflies will walk on the residents’ hands or fingers.

Once the butterfly hatches, the team releases it at the end of the day, weather permitting. If it’s raining, the butterfly remains in the terrarium for a few days.

Denise Hoak, director of personal care services, captured all the lifecycle stages on camera, so even those who weren’t present when butterflies hatched can see what the process looks like. And the team is sharing the experience with others in Garden Spot Village by offering caterpillars to other departments and to residents to give to their grandchildren.

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A monarch caterpillar in a terrarium in the Mountain View personal care community at Garden Spot Village is seeking a place to attach before its final molting process, at which time it will become a chrysalis. It is circling the chrysalis of a sibling. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



A black swallowtail emerging from its chrysalis. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



An adult monarch butterfly emerges from its chrysalis. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



An adult monarch butterfly awaits release from its terrarium at Garden Spot Village. A chrysalis hangs in the background. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



Arlene Myers, a resident of the Mountain View personal care community at Garden Spot Village handles an adult black swallowtail butterfly prior to its release. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



Pat Rogers, of Garden Spot Village, holds a butterfly raised in the community. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



A butterfly brings a smile to the face of Rosa Moshier of Garden Spot Village. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.



Elsie Martin, of Garden Spot Village, holds a butterfly before its release while neighbors look on. Photo by Denise Hoak, Garden Spot Village.