UPDATED: ILLUSTRATING POLLINATORS FOR BOTANICAL ART: BUTTERFLIES

Welcome to Illustrating Pollinators: Butterflies

This course blends artistic skill, scientific observation, and ecological awareness. To help you prepare, this document includes your supply list, guidance for working with your butterfly specimen, and optional reading suggestions. We'll be using graphite only and working from the same butterfly species in class to support a shared learning experience.

You'll observe butterflies both in the field and under magnification, pin a specimen for anatomical study, and create a richly layered study page that blends drawing with written observations. This workshop emphasizes presence, reverence, and thoughtful mark-making—not rushing to complete a finished piece, but learning to *see*, connect, and draw with intention.

What to Expect

Specimen Pinning & Ecology

- Learn scientific pinning techniques for butterfly specimens
- Study anatomical features (wing venation, leg joints) and discuss ecological roles (pollination, habitat adaptation)

Field Observation

- Observe and sketch live butterflies in the garden
- Practice capturing form, proportion, and movement directly from life

Studio Study Page Development

- Reflect on fieldwork and translate it into refined drawings
- Label structures, annotate behaviors, and design a richly layered study page using sketches and notes

Inquiry-Based Dialogue & Reflection

- Engage in peer discussion and guided feedback with Stephey, Clara, and our assistant
- Connect close observation to broader ecological and artistic insights

Dedicated Studio Time

- Each day includes open studio time to deepen your own drawing focus

Studio Drawing Supplies

- Mechanical pencil + lead refills (fine emery board for sharpening)
- Professional graphite pencils
- Value scale finder (hand-drawn preferred)
- Foam eraser
- Blunt embossing tool (for burnishing)
- Hardbound sketchbook
- Artist's tape & tracing paper

Studio Essentials

- Drawing board or clipboard
- Fine-tip dry-erase marker (for acrylic clipboard)
- Daylight-balanced lamp (e.g., clip-on OttLite)
- Handheld magnifier (10× lens, Optivisor, etc.)
- Ruler & proportional dividers

Entomological Supplies

- Pinning kit (~$16 on Amazon): insect pins (#2), pinning board, spreading paper, tweezers, scissors, display case
- Class specimen: Eastern tiger swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), unpinned, from BicBugs (~$18)
- Use code **DIDIUS** at BicBugs for 10% off (one-time use)
- Optional: Bring additional butterflies for studio exploration if previously purchased

Preparing Your Butterfly Specimen for Class

Important: This process should begin 48 hours before class.
Students will need to purchase an unpinned butterfly specimen and an entomological pinning kit before class. To ensure your specimen is ready for pinning and observation, it must be properly hydrated before arrival.

Use code DIDIUS at checkout for 10% off one purchase at BicBugs (only valid for one purchase per account)!

How to Hydrate Your Butterfly Specimen *(from Clara)*

Create a Hydration Chamber:

- Use an airtight container (like Tupperware or a glass jar with a lid).
- Place a damp paper towel or a small sponge inside to maintain moisture.
- Avoid direct contact between the butterfly and the wet material to prevent damage.

Rehydrate the Specimen:

- Gently place the butterfly in the chamber.
- Seal the container and let it sit at room temperature for 24–48 hours.
- Check periodically—wings and legs should become flexible but not oversaturated.

Test Readiness:

- If the wings and body move gently without breaking, it's ready for pinning.
- If still brittle, let it sit a bit longer.

Freeze Specimen:

- After the specimen is rehydrated, remove the wet towel or sponge and place the container in the freezer to freeze the specimen.
- This will preserve the moisture until it is ready for use.

Thaw Specimen:

- 1 hour before class starts, remove the specimen from the freezer and allow to thaw so it is ready for pinning.

Watch a Step-by-Step Video by BicBugs:
https://youtu.be/SoCgg1LaQuo

Optional Reading Recommendations

Clara's Picks:

- *The Life Cycles of Butterflies* by Judy Burris & Wayne Richards
- *Do Butterflies Bite?* by Hazel Davies & Carol A. Butler

Stephey's Picks:

- *How Insects Work* by Marianne Taylor
- *Gardening for Butterflies* by The Xerces Society

Course Description (For Reference)

Updated Butterfly Course Description (title stays the same)

This revised workshop offers a focused, graphite-only exploration of butterfly anatomy, movement, and ecological role. Designed for botanical artists who want to deepen their connection to nature, it offers the best of both worlds: time outdoors observing butterflies in their natural environment, paired with indoor studio time to reflect, refine, and develop your drawings.

You'll engage in specimen pinning, field sketching, and close study of how leg structures, wing shapes, and flight patterns reveal each butterfly's unique function and behavior. Rather than producing a polished, portfolio-ready piece, you'll create a richly layered **study page**—a visual record of labeled sketches and notes that blends scientific observation with creative interpretation. This page will serve as a foundation for future botanical drawings.

Set within a rich, inquiry-based environment, the class encourages exploration, experimentation, and mark-making—reminding us that drawings are just marks on paper, and they emerge line by line. You'll learn to attune to and trust your own eyes—rather than rely on templates or photo references—by slowing down and truly seeing the structure, function, and nuance of your subject.

This workshop isn't just about drawing; it's about cultivating presence, reverence, and confidence through observation. Through close attention and guided curiosity, you'll be invited to wonder, discover, and connect with fellow artists who are inspired by the natural world—and who simply love to draw, draw, draw.

Prerequisite: introduction to botanical drawing 1-2 (or Intermediate BotanicalYou Drawing)

Credit Hours: 6