



WILDLIFE: Gulf Fritillary & White Peacock Butterflies How to Attract and Keep Beautiful Butterflies Visiting.

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

[Woodlands Word – November 2023]

Rivendell is home to many pretty butterflies and their mere presence makes us smile and feel happy. Along with the popular Monarch, pretty Gulf Fritillary and White Peacock butterflies are often seen flitting around our gardens, ponds and preserves. More than just beautiful, butterflies contribute to the health of our planet. While feeding on nectar, butterflies pollinate many types of flowers. They are also an important food source for birds, small animals, and other insects. Let's learn more about these two common butterfly visitors.

Gulf Fritillary Butterfly (*Agraulis vanilla*)



Description: The Gulf fritillary is known as a "longwing butterfly" for its long, narrow wings, compared to other butterflies. Medium-sized, its wings are bright orange with black markings.

Females are generally larger than males with somewhat darker markings. The forewings contains three black-rimmed white spots. Undersides of their wings are brown with elongated silvery-white spots.

It is a brightly colored butterfly common across extreme southern portions of the United States. At home in open, sunny habitats, it is a regular in most butterfly gardens, including those in urban settings. Adults have a quick, erratic flight but are easily drawn to nearby flowers.

[Photos: Bob Frank]

Description: If you see a white butterfly fluttering by, take a closer look at the white wings. The White Peacock's upper side of the wing is white with a round black spot with a light-to-dark brown crescent-shaped trim on forewing. The hind wing has two spots similar to those on the forewing and is trimmed with the same crescent trim in brown to orange. Their wingspan measures 2 to 2 3/4 inches.

White peacock butterflies are commonly found in warm, open, weedy areas such as fields or parks where water is abundant – usually a pond or stream. It flies swiftly and erratically near to the ground.

White Peacock Butterfly (*Anartia jatrophae*)



Butterfly Habitats are Threatened – Butterfly populations have been declining in recent decades. Loss of habitat and breeding grounds are likely due to increased use of pesticides, over development, clear-cutting, and deforestation. Our pond LMZs and native shoreline plantings create a vital habitat to support the life and health of all of our special butterflies. We must continue to maintain these wildlife habitats by working with our HOA Board to secure budget and take action to support these critical areas.

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website at <https://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds>.