

TRANSFERRING BUTTERFLIES FOR MASS RELEASE

Transfer Instructions For Your Butterflies

Why Were Your Butterflies Sent in Individual Envelopes?

Your butterflies have been shipped to you in individual envelopes to preserve their wing condition and to encourage them to enter a state of dormancy during shipping.

When should we transfer the butterflies?

1. If transferring the butterflies into a cardboard release box, you should transfer them about 2 – 4 hours before the planned release time. Once they are in the box, however, store in a cool, dark place (such as a closet) until you are ready to transport them to your event. Just prior to releasing, however, you do want them to be in warm temperatures since they need to be warm to fly.
2. If you are transferring them into a net hanging cage, or a table top cage or sheer box, we recommend you do this an hour or two before the event begins, to prevent wing damage. If the box is solid or covered, you may transfer them earlier. Keeping the cage or sheer box in a cool, low light condition will help keep the butterflies calm. When placing them outdoors, it is best not to have them in strong direct sunlight as they will be too active. Dappled sunshine is the best or even shade. However, try to release them in a sunny area so that they are encouraged to fly. In a display cage, flowers, ferns, and stems with leaves will help provide some shade for them if they are outdoors. The time of day will make a difference also. Later in the day, temperatures are cooler so the sunshine will not stimulate them as much.

What are the transfer steps?

1. Prepare the display cage, organza box or other container. With a cardboard release box, you will need to line the box's sides with paper toweling or tulle. This will give the butterflies a place to perch themselves. If it is easier, you can line the bottom also, but this is not necessary. If you have time, you might want to consider placing a piece of tissue paper crinkled up to form peaks, into the solid box or container and let one or more corners of the tissue paper come up the side of the box. Only a small amount of tissue is needed. Then when you lift the lid off the box to release your butterflies, you can gently tug on the tissue paper to gently stimulate them all to fly out. This is not necessary but is an idea if you have the time. With the sheer box, this is not necessary as they will have light.
2. Ensure your hands are clean and dry. Should you need to handle a butterfly, the oils from your skin will not affect the conditions of the wings.
3. Remove the butterflies from the refrigerator and take them with the box or the cage into a small room with low ceilings (a bathroom is perfect) and shut the door while you are making the transfer.
4. Working steadily, pick up each envelope and hold it just inside the box or the cage, open/unfold the envelope and let the butterfly slide out onto the bottom of the box or cage. As they warm up, the butterflies will start fluttering their wings and flopping about. This is normal. Keep up your work until all the butterflies are transferred, then quickly close the lid of the box or netting. You should be able to transfer all the butterflies into your box or cage with no escapees. However, should a butterfly escape during the transfer process, you will need to recapture it. No problem. Despite what you've always been told, handling a butterfly gently will not harm it. Butterflies are attracted to light, so the escapee will fly toward a window or other source of light in the room. Simply pick it up with the wings closed, close to the body. Alternately, you can cup your hands around the escapee and transfer it to the box/cage.

Using a display cage: Once inside the display cage, the butterflies will need to be fed and watered. Please see below for those instructions. Place the butterflies in a warm, sunny area to energize. Never place them in the direct sunlight.