

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Pottstown's butterfly guru

You don't have to leave Pottstown to find miracles of nature.

Pottstown butterfly guru Ron Richael recently demonstrated how to tag newly hatched Monarch butterflies (after their wings dry) at the Pottstown FARM market Sept. 4 at Smith Family Plaza.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

Spectators looked on in wonder as the Monarchs flew off toward the Mexican mountains, more than 2,000 miles away.

Inspired by Richael's demonstration, I visited the butterfly garden behind his home on West Beech Street.

Talk about an enchanted garden! The 2,500-square-foot garden, which Richael started planting in 1994, has more than 2,000 plants, including varieties grown especially to attract specific species of butterflies to drink their nectar and other varieties to serve as "hosts" where different kinds of butterflies lay their eggs. Each butterfly species has its own preferences.

This year Richael has attracted 45 species of butterflies (a personal record) with almost two months left in the season.

Richael earned a sociology degree at Penn State, but butterflies have been his passion since he was growing up on a farm in Mercer County.

Thanks to 23,000 hours of research, including years of trial and error, Richael has determined which plants entice which butterflies. He has published a book on butterfly gardening to share his knowledge.

Richael's garden not only attracts butterflies, it delights the human senses as well. (More Thursday).



RON RICHAEL

ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES A HANDBOOK FOR BUTTERFLY GARDENING

Ron Richael



RON RICHAEL



CHILDREN WATCH IN AWE as a Monarch butterfly lifts off from a boy's palm at Smith Family Plaza Sept. 4 to begin a 2,000-mile trip to winter hibernation in the mountains of Mexico.