

PRESS RELEASE

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SB Museum's Butterfly Pavilion Up for Best in the Nation

- Sprague Butterfly Pavilion nominated for Best Butterfly Garden in USA TODAY 10BEST Readers' Choice Awards
- Daily [public voting](#) open through Monday, May 11, 2026 at 11:59 am EDT
- *Butterflies Alive!* opens to the public on May 23, 2026
- Supporting butterfly farmers in Costa Rica through sustainable practices

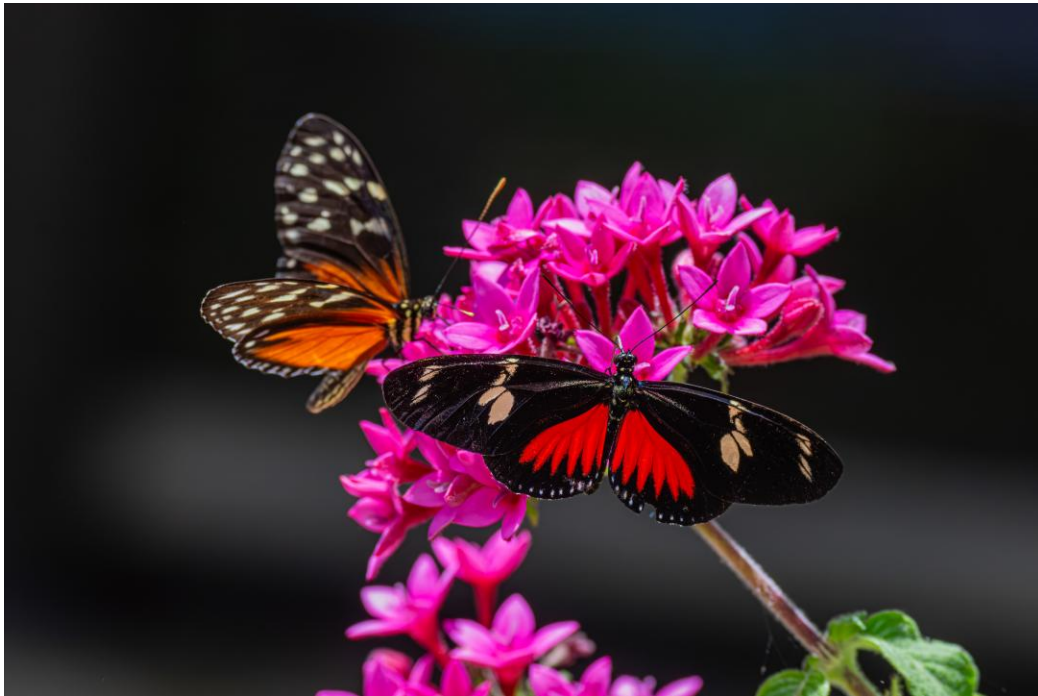


Photo by Gary Robinson

SANTA BARBARA, CA—The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's most popular seasonal exhibit, *Butterflies Alive!*, is once again in the national spotlight. The Museum's Sprague Butterfly Pavilion has been nominated for Best Butterfly Garden as part of the USA TODAY 10BEST Readers' Choice Awards.



Over the next four weeks, readers can vote once per day for their favorite butterfly garden. Voting is open now and closes on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 11:59 am EDT. The top 10 winners, as ranked by USA TODAY 10BEST readers, will be announced on Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

Votes can be cast at <https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/sprague-butterfly-pavilion-santa-barbara-museum-of-natural-history-santa-barbara-california/>.

The Museum is aiming to rise from its #3 national ranking in 2025 to claim the top spot in 2026. But for Museum staff, the nomination represents more than bragging rights. Butterflies Alive! offers an immersive nature experience for guests of all ages while supporting a global conservation network. The butterflies featured in the exhibit are sustainably farmed in Costa Rica, providing direct economic support to small-scale farmers who have chosen environmentally responsible livelihoods. Each vote helps sustain a system that benefits both biodiversity and people.

Earlier this year, the Museum's Director of Guest Experience and lead butterfly wrangler, Kim Zsembik, traveled to Costa Rica to visit partner farms. "A lot of the time, they're choosing butterfly farming as an opportunity for all of their family to generate income," says Zsembik. "They can employ the entire family in this business," During the trip, she observed firsthand the careful process of rearing, cultivating, and distributing butterfly chrysalises for international exhibits. The Museum will be sharing more from this journey in the coming weeks.

Daily voting is open now through May 11, and the Museum encourages supporters to make voting part of their daily online routine. *Butterflies Alive!* officially opens for the season on May 23, 2026.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History connects people to nature for the betterment of both, drawing on collections that preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Central Coast and beyond. Founded in 1916, the Museum is a private nonprofit supported in part by philanthropy, membership, and visitors. Members visit free. For more information, visit <https://sbnature.org/>.



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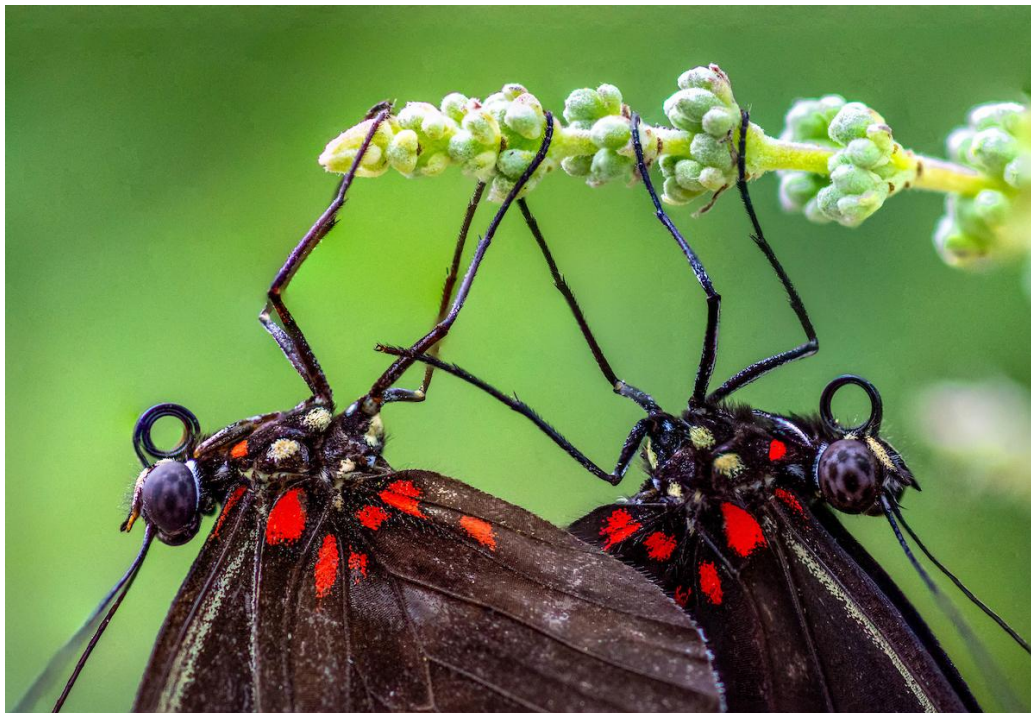


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