

A Bug's Life Painted lady butterfly

Vanessa cardui

Fun facts

- Widespread, migratory species
- Called the thistle caterpillar and also a pest for soybean farmers
- Caterpillars live in silk nests on host plant leaves
- Some years produce high numbers of painted lady butterflies
- 1 to 3 generations per summer

Identification

Caterpillar: Branching spines, pale yellow or cream stripes on body

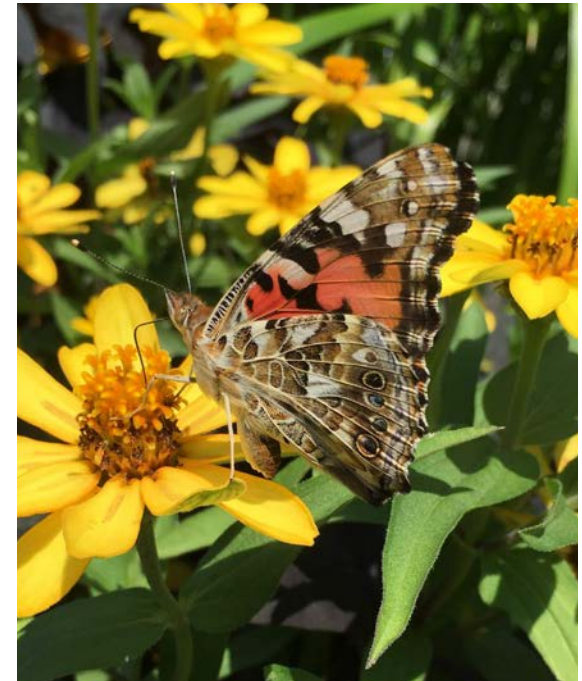
Butterfly: Orange butterfly of medium size, black tips with white spots on forewings, hindwings have 5 blue-black spots, underside is mottled brown with 4 eyespots

Host plants

- More than 100, including thistles, mallow, various legumes

Management

- Management not recommended
- Butterflies are pollinators



Photos: J. Green