

# BUTTERFLY CARE & RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS

NEVER USE INSECT SPRAY OR REPELLANT IN THE SAME ROOM AS YOUR BUTTERFLY EGGS, CATERPILLARS, CHRYSALISES, OR ADULT BUTTERFLIES



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Our experience and careful breeding ensure that your butterflies are large, healthy and beautiful, and that they arrive on time for your event. Big Tree Butterflies is committed to customer service and we are available if you need assistance.

Before we pack them for their journey to you, each butterfly is fed and checked to assure that you have a perfect butterfly release.

Your butterflies are shipped in a strong insulated outer box with cold packs to keep them calm and cool while they travel. They are shipped overnight to arrive on the day before your event.

## Some Rules for All Butterfly Releases

Butterflies should be released *outside during daylight hours*, on a sunny or overcast (not rainy!) day with the temperature above 60 degrees F. Ideally, you should plan to let them fly free no later than two hours before sunset. This will allow enough time for them to nectar (eat) and to find a safe hiding place for the night. If it is raining, do not release your butterflies until the rain stops (a light mist is alright).

Hold your butterfly release in an area protected from the wind, or they will quickly disappear! A sunny, warm, flower-filled area or garden is best. The butterflies' first flight is usually very short, and they will instinctively fly toward the brightest object – people wearing bright colors – or towards flowers.

## When Your Butterflies Arrive

Simply keep them in a safe place away from heat and direct sunlight until you are ready for them. *First*, open the outer box and locate the cold packs. *Next*, place one cold pack in the freezer to refreeze it before returning it to its original location in the box. While the cold pack is refreezing, put a plastic bag filled with ice (or even a bag of frozen vegetables!) wrapped in a towel into the outer box, replacing all original packing material. *Continue* to keep the box in a cool room at or below 74 degrees F and continue to alternate and refreeze the cold packs, as necessary.

## Before Your Butterfly Release

When you are planning your event, just as you choose a personal assistant, choose a *Butterfly Wrangler*. This person will handle the butterflies, as needed, and it will be one less worry for you.

## When Should You Transfer Your Butterflies?

You can transfer your butterflies into the new release box any time before your event begins, but at least an hour or two before to prevent wing damage.

## How Do You Do The Transfer?

1. With the butterflies still in the glassine envelopes, place the inside shipping box into the refrigerator (not the freezer) for 15 minutes just before you are ready to transfer them.
2. Ensure that your hands are clean and dry, so that when you handle the butterflies, the oils from your skin will not affect the conditions of the wings.

3. Remove the inside shipping box from the refrigerator. Take the butterflies, still in the glassine envelopes, along with the release cube, into a small room with a low ceiling (such as a bathroom). Shut the door and windows while you are making the transfer.
4. Working steadily, pick up each glassine envelope; hold it just inside the Cube, open the envelope and let the butterfly slide out onto the bottom of the Cube. As they warm up, the butterflies will start fluttering their wings and flopping about. This is normal. Keep working until all of the butterflies are transferred, and then quickly close the Cube lid.
5. You should be able to transfer all of the butterflies into the Mass Release Cube with no escapees. Should one escape during the transfer process, you will need to recapture it. It's OK. You can do this! Despite what you may have 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 light source in the room. Gently pick it up with the wings closed, holding the wings between your first two fingers, keeping your fingers close to the butterfly's body. Alternatively, cup your hands around the escapee and transfer it into the Cube.

After they are all transferred to the release box stop and take a deep breath. You did it!

If it is more than an hour or two before your event, place the release box with the butterflies in it back into the shipping boxes with the cool packs and continue keeping them cool until an hour or two before the event begins.

Keeping the release box in a cool, low light condition will help keep your butterflies calm. When placing the release box outdoors, it is best to not have it in strong direct sunlight because the butterflies will become very active. Dappled sunshine is the best, or even shade. Try to release them in a sunny area so that they will be encouraged to fly.

### It's Finally Time for Your Butterfly Release!

Open the lid of the Release Box. If the butterflies are warm enough, they will take flight. If they are still a little cool, they may take a little while to begin flying.