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MEDIA RELEASE

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Botanical Gardens announces butterfly releases now available for private parties



CORPUS CHRISTI—The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center now offers a butterfly release option for private party rentals including daylight weddings, birthdays and other events. As more weddings and children's parties have been booked, and Butterfly Garden and screened Butterfly House added, butterfly releases have been requested, primarily by brides.

New butterflies from Texas hatcheries arrive by bus. After opening the box, a small decorative, hand-folded envelope containing one butterfly is given to each person inside the screened enclosure to release on plants or into the air. A mass release tested during April's *Big Bloom* went well, with 40 to 60 visitors being admitted at a time. Native Texas butterflies used at the Botanical Gardens include gulf fritillaries, zebra long wings, monarchs, great southern whites, sulphurs, red admirals and others.

In addition to regular Botanical Gardens rental fees, the butterfly release option requires a minimum purchase of three dozen butterflies, at \$50 per dozen, covering the butterflies and shipping. They must be released inside the Butterfly House, a 2600 square-foot screened enclosure within the Butterfly Garden, during daylight hours. A sculpted fountain adds soothing water sounds to the Butterfly House, while a decorative butterfly bench is perfect for bridal photos.

Depending on event size, bride and groom only, bridal party, or all guests might participate in the release. Bridal couples extend wedding day happiness knowing their butterflies will delight Botanical Gardens visitors for months to come.

For more rental location options, or butterfly release information, call the Botanical Gardens & Nature Center, 361-852-2100; or come to the Visitors Center, 8545 S. Staples St., from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

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One of the Coastal Bend's major visitor destinations and leading nature tourism facilities, the 182-acre South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center showcases 11 uniquely-designed floral exhibits and gardens, including the new screened Butterfly House and 800-plant Anderson Bromeliad Conservatory, acclaimed Orchid House and Plumeria Garden, plus Rose Garden and massive Rose Pavilion, Hummingbird, Arid and Sensory Gardens. Newest exhibits include Reptiles in Residence, and Exotic Parrot collection. Strategically situated along Oso Creek on Corpus Christi's affluent south side, this unlikely blend of beauty in the wild nearly touches the northern reaches of the world-famous King Ranch, in an intriguing wildlife corridor. Tranquil Gator Lake, shaded trails, birding tower, Palapa Grande and wetlands boardwalk make this a key site on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail for both shore birds and woodland song birds. A memorable venue for garden enthusiasts, nature tourists, birdwatchers, wildlife trackers, teachers and students, or those just out for an enjoyable recreational, relaxing change of pace. Delightful *Nature's Boutique* in Visitors Center. Docent-guided group tours, and facilities rentals available. Located at 8545 S. Staples St. in Corpus Christi, the facility is open daily, 8 am to 6 pm. (Summer Hours-- 8 am to 7 pm, June 1 through Labor Day.) General Admission-- \$6 adults; \$5 age 60, active Military, college students; \$3 children 5 through 12. Under 5 and members, free.

Member: American Public Garden Association, American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Gardens Program, Texas Travel Industry Association, Texas Coastal Bend Regional Tourism Council, Greater Corpus Christi Hospitality Association.