

Day of Insects 2014

Day of Insects is held at Reiman Gardens on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, IA. In the beginning it was an informal group gathering to discuss their current projects. This blossomed into an event that is open to the general public. Attendees include hobbyists, professionals, and academics. The mix of folks is impressive and makes it welcoming to everyone! The event doesn't have a set date each year but occurs after the "worst" of the winter and before spring. This year it was the last weekend of March. The day started with coffee and social time before the presentations began at 9am. There is plenty of time to see the exhibits and catch up with old friends and meet a few new ones. Each year there are 15 presentations, each lasting 15 minutes long. This format allows for a little bit of info about each topic and the opportunity to learn about many various aspects of insects from a range of individuals.

I would be hard pressed to pick my favorite presentation but I would like to highlight a couple of topics. One of the coolest new apps for insect people has been developed by computer engineering students at the ISU. It's the [Unified Butterfly Recorder](#) but don't let the name fool you. This app will allow for lists of any insect to be uploaded and tracked. It's perfect for those of us working on bio inventories of our property! It's being beta tested right now and you can check it out if you have an Android or tablet. It is not available for the Nook or Kindle.

Several presentations dealt with insects in a local area. Leland Searles transformed his urban backyard into a prairie and inventoried the insects. He showed a number of slides and talked about each one. A bit closer to home, Ilona Loser, talked about photographing insects in the Cross Plains area. You can see her presentation on [Flickr](#).

It is truly an amazing time. Lots of wonderful folks who willingly share their experiences and knowledge.