

# Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

## Painted Lady Butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*)

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Nymphalidae

Genus: *Vanessa*

Species: Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)

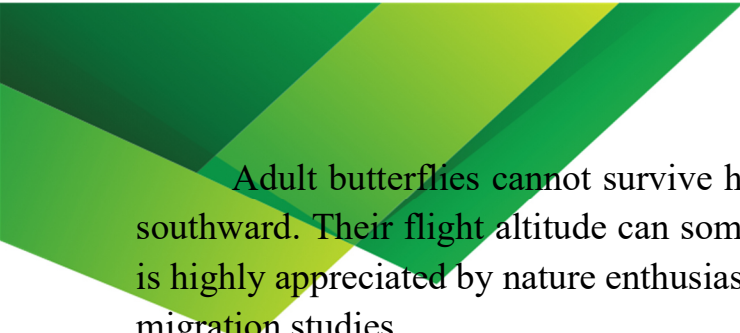


The painted lady butterfly is one of the most widely distributed butterfly species in the world and is well known for its migratory behavior. It is also known as the “thistle butterfly.”

The upper side of its wings is decorated with orange-brown patterns and white spots near the tips. The underside resembles a complex marble-like pattern, providing excellent camouflage.

These butterflies migrate thousands of kilometers every year from Africa to Europe and Asia. In Azerbaijan, mass flights can be observed in spring. Their caterpillars mainly feed on thistle, nettle, and mallow plants. In some cases, they may also damage soy and other leguminous crops. They fly very quickly and prefer sunny weather, often resting on flowers while feeding on nectar. This species plays an important role as a pollinator in ecosystems. A single female can lay hundreds of eggs, usually placing them individually on leaves.

The caterpillars are black and covered with spiny projections. They build small shelters by folding leaves. Pupation occurs suspended from plant stems and lasts about 1–2 weeks depending on climate conditions.



Adult butterflies cannot survive harsh winters in colder regions and migrate southward. Their flight altitude can sometimes reach mountain peaks. This species is highly appreciated by nature enthusiasts and is often used as a model organism in migration studies.

In Azerbaijan, it is found in both lowland and mountainous regions. The painted lady adds color and beauty to gardens. Although large population increases may occasionally cause local agricultural issues, it is generally considered a beneficial pollinator. Its lifespan ranges from a few weeks to several months.

