

Monarchs of Michoacán with Sarada Krishnan of Denver Botanic Gardens

February 6-13, 2010



Every winter, the cloud forests in the mountains of central Mexico play host to millions and millions of over-wintering monarch butterflies. The annual migration of these monarchs from the Great Lakes region is one of nature's greatest mysteries. Incredibly, four to five generations separate the monarch populations that make this long and dangerous migration. The monarchs creating the spectacle in Mexico are the great, great grandchildren of the generation that migrated there the year before. Seeing the sheer abundance of monarchs, bending fir branches with their weight and sounding like raindrops as they take to the air, is an encounter not to be missed.

Sarada Krishnan, Director of Horticulture at Denver Botanic Gardens, is accompanying the group on this trip to Mexico. Sarada has an extensive background in horticulture and butterflies. She served as the Director of Horticulture and Conservation at the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colorado for six years and she is also the author and publisher of "Butterfly Pavilion's Butterfly Gardening: A Guide for Colorado Gardeners". Sarada's depth of knowledge, enthusiasm and passion are sure to make for an unforgettable experience for travelers joining her in Michoacán.

Itinerary

Saturday, February 6 – Morelia

Evening arrival to Morelia International Airport from the US. Transfer to Hotel de la Soledad. The rest of the evening is on your own. Overnight at Hotel de la Soledad.

Sunday, February 7 – Morelia

After breakfast, you'll set out for a city tour of Morelia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Morelia is known for its brilliant colonial structures and remarkable historical churches and boasts a perfect fusion of the Spanish Renaissance and a Mesoamerican experience. Each fragment of standing architecture celebrates the birthplace of many important players in Mexico's rich history. This afternoon you'll visit the candy museum and local art galleries. Back at the hotel, a cocktail

reception will be followed by a presentation by Sarada on monarchs. Dinner is on your own in Morelia. (B,L)

Monday, February 8 – Tlalpujahua Sierra Chincua Monarch Sanctuary

Depart to Tlalpujahua Sierra Chincua Monarch Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to observe the overwintering monarchs. For those who prefer not to hike, an optional horse rental is available. Overnight at Rancho San Cayetano or similar. (B,L,D)



Tuesday, February 9 – El Rosario Monarch Sanctuary/ Patzcuaro

Today brings another visit to observe the monarchs at El Rosario, the most famous sanctuary. A member of the local ejido will give a talk on how tourism at the reserve is benefiting the local communities. Afternoon departure to Patzcuaro, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight at Mansion Iturbe or similar. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, February 10 – Patzcuaro/ Janitzio Island/ Yunuen Island

After breakfast, you'll have a boat tour of Patzcuaro Lake with stops at Janitzio Island to visit a copper artisan's workshop and Yunuen Island to learn about local flora and fauna. You'll also get to visit with community members on Yunuen to learn how they are living sustainably on the island. Tonight, listen to live music while enjoying dinner at a local restaurant in Patzcuaro. Overnight at Mansion Iturbe or similar. (B,L,D)



Thursday, February 11 – Uruapan

Morning departure to Uruapan, the avocado capital of the world and one of the oldest cities in Mexico. Stop at Tzintzuntzan Archaeological Site and a mask-making workshop along the way. Dinner tonight will be at a local avocado farm. Overnight at Mansion del Cupatitzio or similar. (B,L,D)

Friday, February 12 – Uruapan/ Morelia

This morning you'll visit Eduardo Ruiz National Park, a hidden oasis in the middle of Uruapan. The park's sun-dappled paths lead to the Cupatitzio River, the source of the "singing waters". The park's flora stand in stark contrast to the pine woods of Pátzcuaro, located only one hour away and 1,500

feet higher in elevation. Afternoon return to Morelia followed by a final farewell dinner with the group. Overnight at Hotel de la Soledad. (B,L,D)

Saturday, February 13

Early morning transfer to Morelia International Airport for your flight back to the US.

Price per person: \$2350 member rate; \$2450 non-member rate

Single supplement: \$450

A \$500 deposit is required to reserve your space.

Pricing is based on double occupancy and **includes** private transportation, local guides, entrance fees, all meals, lodging, activities listed in the itinerary, in-country airport transfers, pre-departure gathering in Denver to meet fellow travelers, travel insurance, and donation to the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Pricing **does not include** international airfare, alcoholic beverages, optional horse rental at monarch reserves, passport/visa fees, "Cancel for any reason" option on travel insurance policy, items of a personal nature, or gratuities for the guide and driver.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Sheridan Samano at Sheridan@reefstorockies.com or 303.860.6045.