

Australian Butterfly Sanctuary

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- Australia's largest live butterfly exhibit
- Situated in the heart of Kuranda
- Aviary Tours
- "Behind-the-Scenes" Lab Tours

MEDIA ALERT

MONDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2009

BUTTERFLY SANCTUARY HATCHES ITS LARGEST CATERPILLARS

The Australian Butterfly Sanctuary in Kuranda has some very special "babies" in its breeding laboratory at the moment.

Several caterpillars of the world's largest moth, the Hercules Moth, have just eaten their way out of their eggs.

Hercules Moth caterpillars take almost three times longer to hatch than more common caterpillars, some 14 days after the female moth has laid the eggs.

Australian Butterfly Sanctuary General Manager Anja Bakker said the Hercules Moth is native to the region, and is so large, its caterpillar takes longer to complete all of its various processes.

"When they first hatch out of the egg, the caterpillars are only 5mm long, and after eating for 5 or 6 weeks, they will achieve their full caterpillar size of between 140 - 150mm long," she said.

"It's their circumference though that is really impressive, they measure a chunky 30 - 40mm around the girth."

The breeding laboratory is the "engine room" of the butterfly sanctuary, housing up to 4000 caterpillars.

This interesting and educational new experience is included with entry at no extra cost, and provides the opportunity to view first hand the breeding laboratory through special viewing windows, observing the caterpillars in their varying stages of development.

The largest live butterfly exhibit in Australia, the aviary is home to over 1500 tropical butterflies which are all local rainforest species, including the electric blue Ulysses butterfly, and the majestic green and yellow Cairns Birdwing, the largest butterfly in Australia.

For more information, please contact Australian Butterfly Sanctuary General Manager Anja Bakker on 07 4093 7575.



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