

Cloudless Sulphur

The cloudless sulphur, *Phoebus sennae*, is a frequent visitor to butterfly gardens. It moves rapidly through the garden. If approached it will generally fly for quite a distance before coming to rest.

It is a rather large butterfly, 2 1/8 - 3 inches in size. The male is clear yellow above and yellow to mottled with reddish brown below. The female is lemon-yellow to pale yellow on both surfaces, with slight amounts of black markings along the wing margins.

Some of its preferred nectar flowers are red sage (*Salvia coccinea*), coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), scarlet morning glory (*Ipomoea coccinea*), standing cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*), red savory (*Calamintha coccinea*), firebush (*Hamelia patens*), coral bean (*Erythrina herbacea*), and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).

Its larval foods include partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), sensitive plant (*Chamaecrista nictitans*), Bahama cassia (*Cassia chapmanii*), Maryland cassia (*Cassia marilandica*), and coffee senna (*Cassia occidentalis*).

The eggs are yellowish-green, later turning red, and are laid singly on the underside of the leaf.

The larva (or caterpillar) is green with bands of black bumps, and a lengthwise yellow stripe on each side. Coloration is variable and yellow larva may be found eating the (yellow) cassia blooms during the fall – affording excellent camouflage.

The chrysalis is generally 1 1/4 inches in length, smooth, pointed at both ends and humped in the middle. Pinkish-green to green in color. Attached vertically to a branch with a silken thread.

By Sharon LaPlante

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