



SINGHA BOOKS



From: 1169 1st Avenue (fire-engine-red house), P. O. Box 648, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

To: 1191 2nd Avenue
1161 2nd Avenue
Ron Squaglia, 1141 2nd Avenue
1121 2nd Avenue

Phyllis Crane, 1171 2nd Avenue
1151 2nd Avenue
Rich and Ann Nielsen, 1131 2nd Avenue
1111 2nd Avenue

December 8, 2021

Dear Neighbor,

This past summer I began a project to plant Dutchman's Pipe Vines in yards on 1st Avenue. This is your invitation to join the ten of us already participating in this project.

It all started when I saw a piece on CBS national news about the Pipevine Swallowtail. A man in Concord remembered the incredibly beautiful blue and black butterfly from his childhood, saw that they had disappeared, and planted Pipe Vines in the hope that, someday, he would see one again. He tended the vines patiently, year after year. After *eighteen years*, he finally got a Pinevine Swallowtail in his yard.

The habitat of the Pipevine Swallowtail is so tiny that I said to myself, well, *I'll* never see one. And I forgot about it. But I did join the Xerces Society and ordered their book, Gardening for Butterflies.

When I moved here in 2019 I went to the Post Office to open a box. And when I went back to my car, I saw something on the side of the road. A dead butterfly. A *beautiful* butterfly! I picked it up, thinking, "I've seen this butterfly somewhere..." I took it home and put it in a covered glass box.

I began to research what butterfly this could be. And there it was, on the cover of Gardening for Butterflies. A female. Now you *know* that only the most gorgeous of females get to be cover girls, so you can just imagine how beautiful this butterfly is. And I couldn't believe that I was lucky enough to have just moved into its range.

Well, we here in Walnut Grove don't have to wait 18 years. Only 3. That's how long it takes Pipe Vines to mature to the height we need to establish a colony of Pipe Vine Swallowtails here. Then we can get caterpillars from the Academy of Sciences, or from the few people in the East Bay who raise them.

This concept does work. I noticed that Gulf Fritillaries are not uncommon here, and established a colony in my yard. First, I planted their host plant (Passionflower Vines). Next, I asked my gardener to stop using a leaf blower - permanently. Then, I got caterpillars from The Secret Garden and Valley Oak nurseries. I now have chrysalises right outside my living room window; I check each morning to see if they've started to open. The butterflies will migrate to Mexico for the winter, and return in the summer.

You can see the Pipevine Swallowtail on my website, www.SinghaBooks.com/How We Help. I've also posted planting instructions. In May I'll arrange to get vines from the U. C. Botanical Garden at Berkeley, and those of you who'd like to participate can plant them on the same Saturday. Pipe Vines are actually very easy to plant and grow, if you follow the instructions.

Butterflies not only add to our quality of life, but are a critical part of our ecosystem. They're particularly valuable as pollinators. And if the Pipe Vine Swallowtail becomes extinct in Walnut Grove, it's on us. Because we *can* save it.

I'm recruiting people now because I'm about to get busy writing another book. If you'd like to join our project please e-mail me within a week of receiving this letter (SinghaBooks@gmail.com), and tell me how many vines you'd like (I suggest at least 5 - \$29, payable in May). Thank you!

Your neighbor,

Cornelia Bagg Srey