Butterfly of the Month

*Heliconius* spp. (postman)

**Did You Know?**

*Heliconius* butterflies are commonly known as longwings, in reference to their beautiful elongated wings. Their brightly colored wings, with splashes of red, yellow, orange, or blue on a black background, are an attractive signal to mates. They are also a warning signal to predators to stay away, since the adult butterflies have protective chemicals that make them taste unpleasant.

Scientists recognize 48 species of *Heliconius*, most of which show dramatic changes in their wing patterns from one region to another. Look for species such as *Heliconius melpomene* (common postman), *Heliconius erato* (red postman), *Heliconius hecale* (tiger longwing), and many more flying around the Cecil B. Day Conservatory.