

GULF FRITILLARY

As the name implies, this butterfly haunts the Gulf of Mexico and may be seen flying far out over the water. The striking silver spots on the underside help to distinguish this species of butterfly. The adult butterfly has bright orange and black markings, three encircled white dots on the forewing edge, and a 2½-3¾ inch wingspan. It is a beautiful butterfly that many people desire to attract to their garden. The adult frequents verbena, pentas, phlox, and lantana.

The larva, or caterpillar, of the Gulf fritillary feeds on plants such as maypop, blue passionflower, and corky-stemmed passionflower. Unfortunately, Gulf fritillary larvae are voracious eaters and can defoliate a passion vine quickly. So, if you are trying to grow passionflowers this larva can be a harmful pest. While the caterpillars are easily eradicated with commercial pesticides such as Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), you should first try selectively reducing their numbers by physically relocating them. This way, you are still likely to see some extra butterflies later in the season, and you will not harm any beneficial species. In fact, some gardeners grow passion vine primarily to attract butterflies to their gardens. In addition, passion vines may become a weed in pasture grass. In this instance, growers may desire the Gulf fritillary caterpillar to help control the passion vines.



CATERPILLAR / LARVA

ADULT

SIZE |—————|
Up to 3¾ inches

For more Information check:

<http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/>

<http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/links/index.shtml#entomology>