



## Butterfly beauty!

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**DATE RECEIVED:**

March 10, 2016

**DOI:**

10.15200/winn.145764.47776

**ARCHIVED:**

March 10, 2016

**CITATION:**

Dorit Hockman, Butterfly beauty!, *The Winnower* 3:e145764.47776, 2016, DOI: 10.15200/winn.145764.47776

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My Foldscope has made me increasingly fascinated by insect wings, and so I was very excited when I happened across a couple deceased butterflies that were still in a good enough condition to mount and examine. The first was in a pile of dead leaves in my Cape Town garden, and the second met its end in the grill in the front of my rental car as I was driving from Port Elizabeth to Grahamstown. After reading [Aaron's post on butterfly wings](#), I am happy to be able to add to the Foldscope butterfly scale library, as well as expose some fascinating butterfly anatomy.

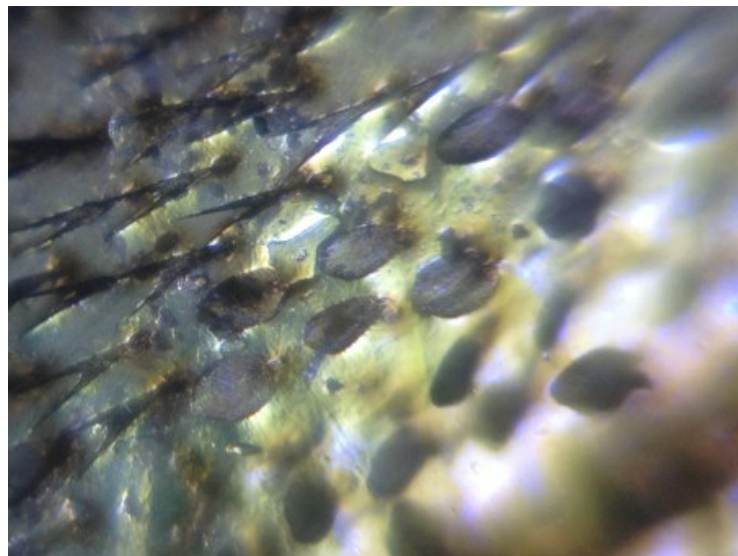
Butterfly 1: Garden Acraea (*Acraea horta*)



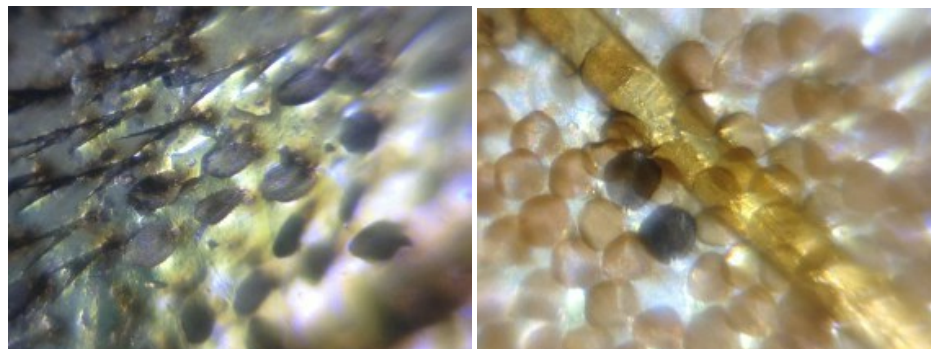
This butterfly is common in South African gardens, as is easily identifiable by its transparent forewings, which are distinct from its bright orange and black hindwings. I mounted a piece of each wing.

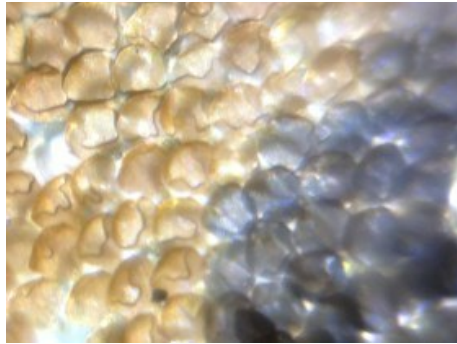


The scales on the forewing consist mostly of forked hair-like scales. Scattered amongst them are broader tile-shaped scales, which seemed more prominent near veins.



On the hindwing, the forked scale scales are concentrated at the wing edge, while the rest of the wing is populated with wider tile-shaped scales, coloured black, orange or transparent. The veins form beautiful yellow stripes under the scales.

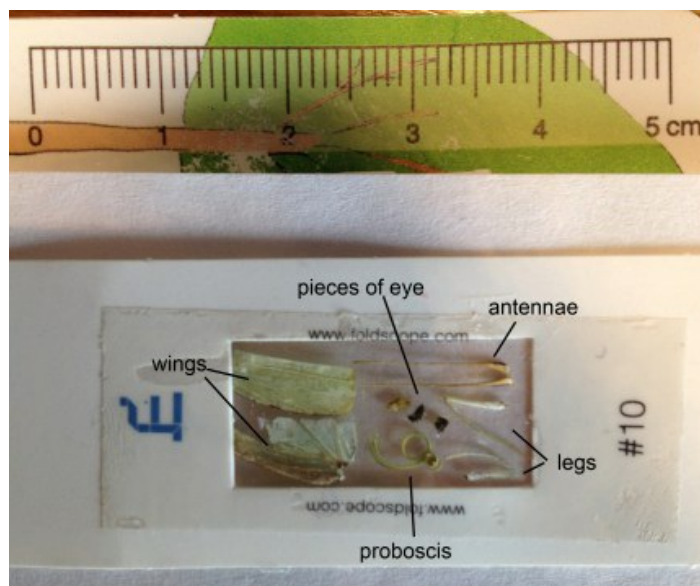




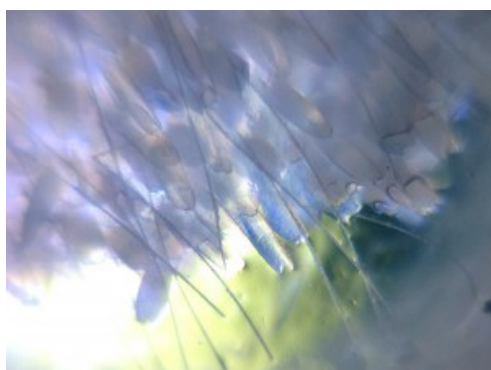
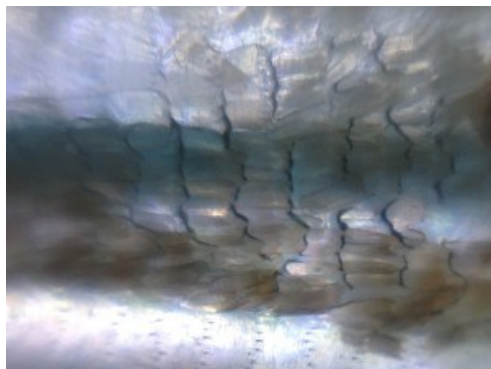
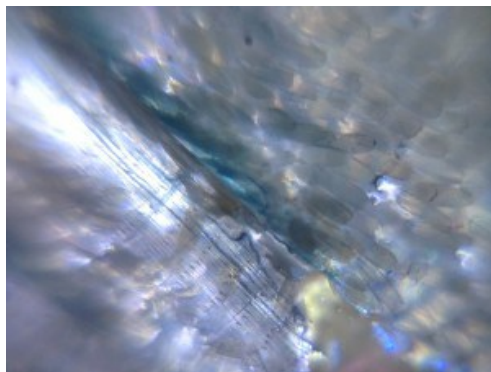
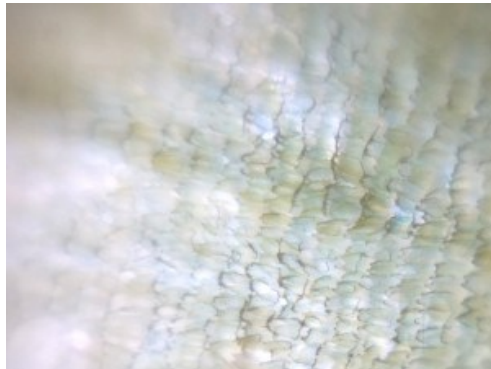
Butterfly 2: most likely a Cabbage White (*Pieris brassicae*)



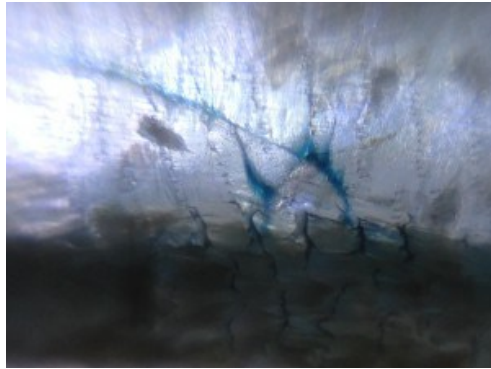
These butterflies were introduced to South Africa, and are common in Cape Town gardens and in the Eastern Cape (where I was driving). I dissected and mounted several parts of the butterfly individually.



The scales on the wings were a beautiful pearly white, streaked with brown and blue patches, as well as strange blue veins.







And finally... the most exciting structure to see was the proboscis. I could clearly see the paired structure, patterned with green and brown, and ending in a beautiful tight spiral. I had no idea that the mouthparts looked this cool up close!

PS I just showed the Foldscope to group of honours students here at the University of Cape Town and they are SUPER excited about it!!! So expect some new Foldscope ambassadors soon...

