

# NATURE

Marilyn Borton

How do trees or shrubs know when to stop growing? How do birds know how, when and where to build a nest? Do they think, ponder or remember? As I look out of my kitchen window at the plants that I've been watching ever since we moved here seven years ago, these questions and more pop into my mind, as they have each Spring for all of my lifetime.

There are so many other similar questions about nature that I find intriguing. Like the Monarch butterfly's annual migration from Mexico or California to Canada. It takes four generations to make the 1800-mile migration and they come back every year to the same tree in California where their great, great grandparents started. They need a temperature of 55 degrees to survive and recent years have confused them because of climate change. They lay their eggs on the milkweed plant, the only source of food for the young caterpillars. Over the last 20 years, habitat loss and herbicide use have reduced the monarch population by 90 percent. We can't let that happen.

Just as awesome are the swallows who arrive in San Juan Capistrano, California, every year on March 19 after a 6000-mile flight from Argentina. Some invisible force drives them and people come from all over the world to celebrate their arrival with the ringing of bells in the Mission, a Fiesta, and a Parade to welcome them.

But most awesome of all, and I think this falls under the "Nature" category, is to see a newborn baby, completely finished with fingernails, eye lashes and everything it needs, along with a mother's love, to grow into adulthood. I've seen eight brand new grandchildren and almost seven great grandchildren, and I never get used to the miracle of birth.

Nature is so awesome. Who said there is no God?