

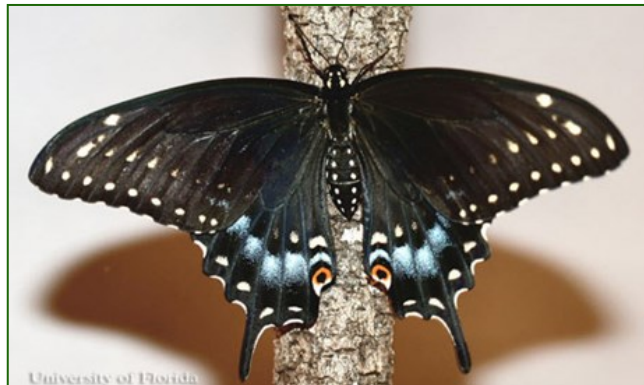


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Contributed by Janet Mackey

BRING ON THE BUTTERFLIES!

In hopes of attracting swallowtail butterflies this spring, I let my parsley grow through the winter. My parsley plants are about four feet tall right now, and they are serving as a giant buffet for insects, including the eastern black swallowtail.



Female eastern black swallowtail.
(Photo by Donald Hall, University of Florida,
entnemdept.ufl.edu.)

The caterpillars look quite different in their different stages, called instars. In its final instar, the caterpillar looks a lot like a Monarch caterpillar.



Two stages of black swallowtail caterpillars on my parsley.

The female butterfly lays between 30 and 50 eggs per day. The tiny eggs start out pale yellow in color and turn dark grey just before hatching.



Looks like I am due for a new caterpillar pretty soon!



Two generations of ladybugs – larva and adult (upside down).

While watching the Swallowtail activity on my parsley plant, I found at least 8 other species of little critters, including ladybugs and ladybug larva. Both are great consumers of aphids.

Photos by the author except as noted.