

# School-to-Nature



Female Tiger Swallowtail



Taking nectar from a Lantana flower

## Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

This butterfly is native to the eastern half of the U.S. and parts of southern Canada. It is one of our largest butterflies, reaching 4-5 inches across. It is colored a rich chocolate brown background with bright golden and yellow telltale tiger stripes arranged vertically on the wings. On Conservancy lands, host plants for caterpillar eggs are cottonwood, willow, ash, and some wild fruit trees.

Swallowtails may emerge in our area in mid to late June, then mate and lay eggs which will produce butterflies again by late July through August, when you can find swallowtails enjoying the nectar of our late-season wildflowers such as Queen-Anne's Lace, Asters, Liatris, Milkweed, Thistles, and Coneflower. Their life cycle is: 4-10 days in the egg, 3-4 weeks as a caterpillar, 10-20 days in the chrysalis, and only about two weeks of life as an adult butterfly. Swallowtails have two life cycles during our warm season.

The caterpillar is especially interesting for its camouflage. When it is tiny, the caterpillar is brown and white; but when it grows large it is bright green with false eye spots near its tail, colored white, orange and black, to confuse predators. The predators for this butterfly and its caterpillars are birds, large insects, and some spiders.

Swallowtail butterflies get their name from the birds named Swallows, because those birds also have long tails, similar to those on the butterfly's hind wing.



Full grown caterpillar stage with false eyes



Swallowtail egg on a host plant

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