

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly, *Papilio glaucus*, is one of the five swallowtail butterflies native to the eastern United States. Their range extends east of the Rockies from Florida to Ontario. The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly resembles its name. The male is a handsome yellow with dark "tiger" stripes. The female takes on two distinct forms, one yellow like the male, and the other black (more common in the South) with dark stripes. Both females have a hindwing with blue chevrons while the upper hindwing has two orange spots. These markings merge into one continuous line, making it magnificent to look at. Females are larger than the males, with a wingspan up to 5 inches; both male and female tiger swallowtails are larger than Monarchs.

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies can be seen in the woods, forests, gardens, parks and orchards, as well as "puddling" along streams, lakes, rivers and puddles. Large numbers like to "puddle" on mud, damp gravel or wet sand. When the swallowtails puddle, they extract sodium ions and amino acids which aid them in reproduction.

The total life cycle of the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly is about two months from spring to fall. The males are not aggressive towards each other, even though you might see lots of whirling and swirling happening; that is all part of their courting. After mating, the female lays its eggs on the host plants. When the eggs first hatch they look like bird droppings. If that's not enough disguise, as the caterpillar grows, it turns green with large eye spots, which are not really eyes. It resembles a snake! When the caterpillar is fully grown, it turns into a pupa. This stage is the chrysalis. The chrysalis of this butterfly is greenish brown. After a month of cocooning, a butterfly will emerge fully grown. If the weather is too cold, the butterfly might wait until spring. The butterflies will produce up to 2-3 broods.

The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly is not on the endangered list, maybe because of the large number of plants that can serve as food sources for adults or hosts for eggs. Nectar producing plants for adults include penta, verbena, Joe Pye weed, coneflower (*Echinacea*), butterflyweed, and milkweed. Host plants for eggs are trees such as willow, elm, tulip, cherry, poplar, birch, and plum. Lilacs produce nectar for adults and act as host plants for eggs. Be sure to look for these striking butterflies this summer!



Checklist for July

Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Check containers and hanging baskets daily for water needs.
- ✓ Pinch back ends of leggy basket plants.
- ✓ Apply a slow-release fertilizer to encourage annuals to continue blooming.
- ✓ Water early in the morning when little water is lost to evaporation. Use soaker hoses around plantings to reduce water use by 25-50%.
- ✓ Prune and fertilize climbing roses after bloom. ["Roses and Their Care"](#)
- ✓ Monitor vegetables for symptoms of blight or fungus. See Rutgers Fact Sheet [FS1124](#)

Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Maintain a 3 inch mulch layer around trees and shrubs. It should not be higher and mulch should not touch tree trunks.
- ✓ Consider drip irrigation and soaker hoses with timers as efficient watering practices. See Rutgers Fact Sheet [FS450](#)
- ✓ Monitor all plants for insect damage. Sunny and very hot weather may add stress.

Lawn

- ✓ Wait until fall to fertilize. See Rutgers Fact Sheet [FS102](#) "Your Lawn and Its Care."